



MOORHEN AND LITTLE CRAKE FEEDING ON CARRION

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Abstract. On January 10, 1999 on the Vistula River in the center of Kraków (S Poland) two adult Moorhens were seen foraging on a dead gull. A similar observation was recorded December 15, 2001 in the Sołacki City Park in Poznań (W Poland) when a Moorhen was seen to be foraging on a dead Mallard. This phenomenon may be adaptive in nature. The use of carrion by Moorhens may be related to the more frequent wintering of this species in urban areas of central Europe. On October 11, 2004 near the city of Diyarbakir (37°54'N 40°15'E, SE Turkey) a Little Crake was seen to be foraging on a dead frog. Comparing the size of the frog with the average size of a bird's body the thorax could have been about 5–7 cm. It is the first record of a Little Crake foraging on carrion and also the first time a vertebrate was seen to be part of the diet of this species.

Key words: Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, Little Crake, *Porzana parva*, carrion, foraging.

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Питание падалью камышницы и малого погоныша. - М. Цях. - Беркут. 13 (2). 2004. - 10.01.1999 г. на р. Висла в центре Кракова наблюдалась камышница, кормившаяся на мертвой чайке. Подобный случай отмечен и 15.12.2001 г. в одном из парков Познани: камышница кормилась на мертвой крякве. Поедание падали камышницами может быть связано с участвовавшими случаями зимовки в урболандшафте Центральной Европы. 11.10.2004 г. в г. Диярбакир в Турции наблюдался малый погоныш, поедавший мертвую лягушку. Это первый отмеченный случай питания вида падалью, а также позвоночными животными.

Most Palearctic species of Rails, Gallinules and Coots (Rallidae) are omnivorous. Although their diets are made up of a very wide variety of both plant and animal foods (Cramp, Simmons, 1980), it has not been well researched. Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) feed on leaves, buds, fruits and plant seeds as well as earthworms, spiders, insects and molluscs. They can also feed on tadpoles, small fish, birds' eggs and their shells as well as scraps from houses. Furthermore they have been seen to forage on fish and bird carrion. Little Crakes (*Porzana parva*) primarily eat small invertebrates – worms, spiders, insects and snails – as well as seeds of aquatic plants and – more rarely – vegetative parts (Cramp, Simmons, 1980).

On January 10, 1999 on the Vistula River in the center of Kraków (S Poland) two adult Moorhens were seen foraging on a dead gull. The bird was lying on the ground, its abdomen was open and the Moorhens were pecking out fragments of tissue. It is possible that earlier crows or gulls had opened the abdomen. Something similar was recorded Decem-

ber 15, 2001 in the Sołacki City Park in Poznań (W Poland) when a Moorhen was seen to be foraging on a dead Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), on which the Hooded Crows (*Corvus cornix*) had foraged earlier (P. Wylegała in litt.). Information about Moorhens consuming carrion is extremely rare. This phenomenon – related to the secretiveness of this species – possibly could be more common and it could be an adaptation. The described observations took place in winter in urban locations. The possibility of finding high calorie food near city reservoirs could be connected with increase of number of Moorhens wintering within urbanized areas of Poland and the north part of the range as well (Cempulik, 1992; Tomiałojć, Stawarczyk, 2003).

On October 11, 2004 near the city of Diyarbakir (37°54'N 40°15'E, SE Turkey) while studying Rails and Crakes on an old river beds, a foraging Little Crake in immature plumage was seen having found a dead frog (*Rana ridibunda*) floating on the plants' surface. The bird began to intensively peck at the dead frog, tearing off pieces of tissue and at the end swal-



lowing the skeleton with parts of the body. Comparing the size of the frog with the average size of a Little Crane's body its thorax could have been 5–7 cm. The entire time of consumption was seven minutes, after which the bird cleaned itself for next six minutes. It then continued to forage amidst the plants. Observations were made at a distance of about 20 m using 20–60 x 82 spotting scope. It is the first record of a Little Crane foraging on carrion and also the first time a vertebrate was seen to be part of the diet of this species.

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О СЛУЧАЯХ ОХОТЫ ВРАНОВЫХ ПТИЦ НА СИЗЫХ ГОЛУБЕЙ В ГОРОДЕ

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About cases of hunting of corvids on Rock Doves in city. - I.R. Merzlikin, A.A. Gorbushenko. - Berkut. 13 (2). 2004. - Several cases of hunting observed in Sumy (NE Ukraine) in 2001–2004 are described. Rock Doves were attacked by Raven, Hooded Crow, Rook, Magpie, Jay. A Raven has brought down a pedigree dove in flight and continued to peck it on ground. Other corvids attacked doves on ground. The tendency of predation of corvids on Rock Doves is observed in urbanized territories last years. It can be connected with high number of doves and easiness of preying them. [Russian].

Key words: Corvidae, Rock Dove, *Columba livia*, behaviour, foraging.

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В настоящее время достаточно много внимания уделяется изучению синантропизации животных и их различным поведенческим адаптациям. Врановые являются одной из таких групп птиц, которые успешно сосуществуют с человеком. У отдельных видов, в частности у серой вороны (*Corvus cornix*), отмечалось хищничество по отношению к сизым голубям (*Columba livia f. domestica*). Как правило, это было групповое нападение ворон и клевание голубя (Костюшин, 1994), либо сталкивание голубя в воду и последующее добывание его там, или же групповое и целенаправленное отеснение нелетного голубя с тротуара к проезжей части улицы с последующим расклевыванием погибшей под колесами машин

птицы (Мешкова, 2000, 2003). Мы также были свидетелями хищнического поведения как серой вороны, так и других представителей этого семейства.

22.03 2004 г. тихим солнечным вечером (17¹⁵) над частными постройками г. Сумы взмыла стая породистых сизых голубей. Во время набора высоты на одного из них, летевшего чуть в стороне, спикировал ворон (*C. corax*) и сбил его. Обе птицы упали на огород в 2 м от штакетника высотой 1,6 м, и ворон стал ожесточенно клевать голубя. Жертва, волоча поврежденное крыло, устремилась к штакетнику, а ворон, следуя за ним, продолжал наносить удары клювом. Дойдя до штакетника, голубь еще около метра шел вдоль него, потом пролез между