

FOOD AVAILABILITY AND HABITAT COMPONENTS AFFECTING THE OCCURRENCE OF GREEN WOODPECKERS (*PICUS VIRIDIS*) IN THREE SPAS

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Woodpecker species have a large contribution to maintain biodiversity, as being primary cavity-makers, they provide nesting places for numerous species even for highly protected ones such as the European roller. Nature 2000 is network of sites selected to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable species and habitats, however these are not strictly protected areas, sustainable management of them must to be ensured. The aim of this study was to investigate which factors affect the occurrence of Green woodpecker in SPAs characterized by open landscape to provide suggestions to preserve their habitats and ensure nesting places for European rollers, as well. The most important factors affecting the Green woodpecker occurrence was the area, the size and number of the old deciduous forests. The control sites contain higher coverage and higher number of young forests patches. The area of arable lands and permanent grasslands did not affect the Green woodpecker occurrence. However, the coverage of grasslands was higher than 30% both in control and occupied sites, therefore our results indicate that this amount of grasslands was probably suitable for the species. Ant survey was carried out in two study sites HUKN10007 and HUKN10008 SPAs. Representative sampling around location occupied and control points were done in a 500 m radius area. Twenty 5 m x 5 m (25 m²) quadrats were mapped around each location point, where the density of ant nests, ant diversity and the type of habitat were recorded. Our results indicate that the HUKN10008 SPA provides better conditions for Green woodpeckers owing to the significantly higher abundance of ants both on territories of woodpeckers and control points. Because of the high rate of agricultural areas and smaller amounts of suitable habitats, the density of ant nests was significantly lower on the mapped points of HUKN10007 SPA. On both study sites, the density of ant nests was significantly higher on the territories of the Green woodpecker than on control points. Diversity of ants was highest on territories of the Green woodpecker of the HUKN10008 SPA. Our results indicate that the studies SPAs provided suitable breeding habitat for Green woodpeckers, although the forest coverage was relatively low. The forest

naturalness characteristics and composition as well as food availability were found as important factors, indicating the significance of extensively managed open habitats and forest patches in SPAs.