

MONITORING WATER BIRDS BREEDING POPULATIONS IN CZECH REPUBLIC: AIMS, METHODS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Intensive waterfowl monitoring programmes have been carried out in the Czech Republic (former Czechoslovakia) already for several decades. The oldest programme, i.e. International Waterfowl Census, have been organised during each winter since 1965. The rapid decline in number of many waterfowl species (especially ducks) which was recorded during the first half of the 80s, stimulated the initiation of programmes aimed at the investigation of breeding waterfowl population, such as Monitoring Water Birds Breeding Population by Two-check Method (national programme started in 1988) and Monthly Counts (in some regions, since second half of the 80s). In several regions, exact breeding pairs survey have been pursued annually since 60s, 70s respectively.

Specialised programmes aimed at particular waterbird groups, such as Ciconiforms, Storks, Geese, Mute Swan, Waders also exist in the Czech Republic.

Comparisons of results of particular monitoring programmes show that the widely used census methods (e.g. Two-check Method or Monthly Counts) give only relative data on numbers of particular water bird species. The largest underestimation of species abundance is typical in species which show hidden live habit (e.g. Little Grebe, Rallidae, Passerines). However, no significant differences were found between trends in numbers or/and the community (quild) structure recorded by the Two-check Method and by the direct breeding pairs survey.

Data on population changes obtained by Monitoring Water Birds Breeding Population by Two-check Method in 1988-94 are presented in graphs.