



geese in 1998-2009 remained stable, whereas according to censuses in the floodplain goose abundance has considerably decreased. At the same time, considerable congestions of up to 10 000-15 000 birds are annually registered near settlements in the floodplain periphery in the pre-departure period, when spring goose hunting has ended. Geese are observed within the "green belts" of the villages of Izhevsk, Ivankovo, and Odoevskaya Ferma of Spassky District, where poachers do not disturb them.

One can conclude that during spring migrations geese are constantly moving in search for good foraging and resting grounds. These movements cover considerable areas both in the floodplain and outside it.



ON NESTING OF GRAYLAG GOOSE *ANSER ANSER* ON BOLSHOY AINOV ISLAND (VARANGER-FJORD, BARENTS SEA)

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In the past decades a colony of Graylag Geese *Anser anser* has formed on Bolshoy Ainov Island in the south-eastern part of Varanger-Fjord (69°50'N, 31°34'E, Kandalakshsky Strict Nature Reserve). About 20 pairs nested on the island in 2002, but in 2008 we found and examined 145 nests. The main nesting habitats were areas under *Leymus arenarius* (tussocks), where 49.6 % of all nests were found, and willow *Salix spp.* (scrub) – 39.3 %; less frequently did the birds settle among tundra vegetation – 5.5 %, and on bedrock outcrops – 3.4 %. The geese first occupied scrub, then tussocks, rocks, open tundra spaces, and last – marshes. The density was about 79.9 nests/km² in



2008. Most densely populated were the scrub (356.4 nests/km²) and tussocks (234.2 nests/km²), much less populated – rocks (24.5 nests/km²) and tundra (7.7 nests/km²). Scrub occupies twice smaller area than tussocks. Presumably, the center of the colony is the willow carr in the southern part of the island, where the nesting density is the highest and stay is the longest. The average clutch size is 3.98 ± 0.19 eggs ($n = 43$), the average newly hatched brood size is 4.0 ± 0.3 ($n=12$). About 13.2 % of the nests were ravaged. The first goslings hatched on June 7-8, the majority – from 15th to 20th of June, the latest ones were expected on June 27. The greatest threat to Graylag Goose on Bolshoy Ainov Island during the breeding period are Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*, Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*, Raven *Corvus corax*, Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*.



SPREADING OF SARCOPTIC MANGE IN ESTONIAN WOLF POPULATION FOLLOWING ANTI-RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAMME

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Rabies was common disease among Estonian wild mammals until 2005. During last decade 12 different wild mammal species were proved to be infected whereby the main vectors were red fox and racoon dog comprising together 97 % of all wild rabies cases. Last peak of the epidemic was in 2003 when 697 cases of positive wild mammals were detected. Oral anti-rabies vaccination of wild predator mammals started in Estonia in 2005 and has been continued until the present. Vaccination was very effective and just two years later only 2 wild rabies cases were detected. Following the vaccination the number of racoon dogs has been increased fast and continuously. During last four