Meissner W. 2002. *Ringing recoveries of the Common Snipe (Gallinago gallinago) caught during autumn migration in the Gulf of Gdańsk region.* Ring 24, 1: 17-23.

Abstract

The autumn migration of the Common Snipe was studied in years 1983-2000 in western part of the Gulf of Gdańsk (Polish Baltic coast). In this period 1763 birds were ringed and 50 long-distance recoveries were obtained. The Common Snipe is one of the favoured game birds and the obtained recovery rate (2.8%) is rather high in comparison with other wader species ringed on the Gulf of Gdańsk coast (Meissner and Remisiewicz 1998). After leaving the Gulf of Gdańsk the birds continue their migration in western direction. The majority of them were recorded in France (62%) and Great Britain (20%). The bulk of records were concentrated along the English Channel and the Gulf of Biscay coasts. Although 88% of recovered Common Snipes were shot, there were only 4 recoveries from the western Mediterranean and not one recovery from the Apennine Peninsula, where hunting pressure is very high. It suggests that Common Snipes passing northern Poland follow almost exclusively the southern Baltic and the southern North Sea coasts and their main wintering grounds stretch from Denmark, through northern France, to the Pyrenees. The recovery rate of birds ringed in July was over twice as high as in August and September, in spite of the fact that the majority of Common Snipes was passing the study area between the second decade of August and the end of September. Reasons for differences in recovery rate among birds ringed in subsequent months and in different years are discussed. The average speed of migration calculated on the basis of autumn direct recoveries was only 22.6 km/day (SD = 13.3, N = 17). It confirms that Common Snipes move slowly in autumn. The species adheres to the B-strategy sensu Alerstam and Högstedt (1982) and migrates in autumn in short flights with very low fat reserves.

W. Meissner, Dept. of Vertebrate Ecology and Zoology, University of Gdańsk, Legionów 9, PL-80-441 Gdańsk, Poland, E-mail: biowm@univ.gda.pl

Key words: Common Snipe, ringing recoveries, migration, Gulf of Gdańsk