

ABSTRACTS

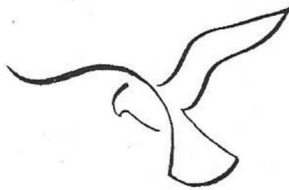
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Amphibia as a prey of raptors in European Russia

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Majority of raptors in European Russia (21 out of 34 species) eat amphibia either occasionally (17 species) or regularly (4 species). Latters are Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*), Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), and Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*). We study amphibia as a prey of Buzzards from 1959 to 1999 in the Moscow, Vladimir, Voronezh, Kaluga and other regions. Four amphibians were recorded as an important food of that raptor. They were frogs (*Rana temporaria*,

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R. arvalis) and toads (*Bufo viridis*, *B. bufo*). First of all it was found that analysis of pellets could not be used as a reliable method to assess a significance of amphibia in Buzzard's food: only 20-25% of frogs actually eaten by those raptors were recorded as their bones in pellets. Therefore we used various methods to take away food items from nests. Thanks to them we found that frogs occupied from 5-7% (when voles were abundant) to 35-45% (in years with scarce voles) of Buzzard's food rations in various regions. Amphibia serve as an obvious substitute food for buzzards when their principle prey, namely voles, are in decline. However populations of frogs and toads are so high (usually 50-100 individuals per ha in meadows) that predatory pressure of Buzzards upon them is always insignificant.