

Sammanfattning

En melanistisk törnskata påträffades nära Lipnica Wielka (Karpaterna, södra Polen) den 16 maj 2007. Manteln samt undersidan och stjärten var mörkbruna och vingarna med sina täckare svartbruna. Huvud och hals var något ljusare bruna och runt ögat fanns en mörk mask. Övergumpen och stjärtfjädrarnas baser var något ljusbruna. De yttre stjärtpenorna var tydligt ljusare än de inre och kontrasterade klart mot de senare. Näbben var svart och benen normalt mörkgrå. Fågelns beteende var helt normalt och den uppträdde i sällskap med två normalt färgade törnskator. Detta är det första fyndet av melanism hos någon törnskata.

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Long handling time of a big prey – Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* foraging on frog

*Lång hanteringstid för ett stort byte – trastsångare *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* sväljer en groda*

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The diet of the Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* includes mainly small invertebrates (insects and some spiders and snails), but also larger items like frogs of a length up to 3 cm (predominantly newly metamorphosed) and small lizards have been recorded (Leisler 1991, Cramp 1998, Bairlein 2006). The feeding techniques of the Great Reed Warbler are not as well studied as in other *Acrocephalus* species. Many of the more frequent prey items (dragonfly nymphs, aquatic beetles and their larvae, aquatic *Hemiptera*, fish fry) are presumably taken from the water surface or just beneath (Cramp 1998). Handling of larger food items like a fully developed frog has not yet been described. However, it has been reported that the closely similar Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* killed small young frogs,

knocking them against the ground before swallowing (Zarudnyi 1896 after Cramp 1998).

On the afternoon of 22 August 2007, we witnessed an immature Great Reed Warbler which attacked, killed and consumed a fully developed frog *Rana* sp. in southern part of the “Druzno Lake” reserve (54°03'N, 19°27'E) in northern Poland. The incident occurred on the floating leaf of lesser bullrush *Typha angustifolia* in a small islet of lesser bullrush in a reservoir covered partially with water vegetation. We observed it with binoculars from a distance of 10 meters.

The frog was similar to the Great Reed Warbler's head in length, thus ca 4 cm (mean head-bill length \pm SD of seven other immature Great Reed Warblers caught in the same place in the same period was 42.9 ± 0.71 mm, and culmen was 12.3 ± 1.05 mm). Most probably it was a Pond Frog (*Rana lessonae*; body length of adult males is 4.3–7.5 cm; Berger 2000), which occurs regularly in the reserve (Nitecki 2002). The body mass of the prey frog made up approximately 22–33% of the Warbler's body mass, based on reported mass of Pond Frog 4.5–5.0 cm length (6–9 g; Juszczuk 1987) and mean body mass \pm SD of seven other immature Great Reed Warblers caught in the same place in the same period – 27.5 ± 1.70 g.

We did not observe the hunting action from the very beginning. However, our attention was drawn by the voice of the frog which had probably just been attacked and now struggled with the Warbler close to the water surface. The Great Reed Warbler was trying to seize the frog. It had difficulty maneuvering the frog into its mouth. The fifth swallowing attempt was successful. The whole handling action with the frog took at least 2 min 40 sec (from 15:48:10 to 15:50:50). After swallowing, the warbler was resting during 34 minutes (from 15:50:50 until 16:24:01). During this period, the individual was sitting on lesser bullrush leaf just above the water surface almost motionless with ruffled feathers, closed eyes and hung down wing feathers. After that it flew away.

Consuming such a big and highly caloric prey should be near the maximum momentary energy intake of Great Reed Warbler and probably compensated the time and energy expenditure of handling. On the other hand, swallowing such a big prey might have resulted in choking to death. This has been reported for e.g. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* attempting to consume European Bullhead *Cottus gobio* (Bell 1968) and Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* swallowing a Little Grebe (McCanch 2003).

Intensive and long lasting food item handling limits time available for antipredatory vigilance (Lendrem 1983, Popp 1988) and may draw attention of predators. The posture of the bird during resting after swallowing the prey (sitting just above the water surface with closed eyes and ruffed feathers) strongly suggested that this individual could have been surprised and have some trouble escaping in case of a predator's attack from air (e.g. Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*) or water (e.g. Northern Pike *Esox lucius* or American Mink *Mustela vison* – all common species in the reserve).

It is possible that frogs of such a size are not uncommon in the Great Reed Warbler diet (not reported in literature due to difficulty of observation of such behavior). The described individual was immature and inexperienced and might have not known exactly how to efficiently handle such a big prey. Experiments performed on Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapillus* showed that handling times tended to decrease with experience, i.e. performances improved with successive replicates (Paszkowski & Moermond 1984). Alternatively, it is possible that the Warbler mistook the frog for another prey (e.g. water beetle).

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Sammanfattning

Trastsångare lever normalt på evertebrater men tar i undantagsfall också små grodor. Vi observerade en ungfågel av trastsångare som attackerade, hanterade och svalde en fullt utvecklad groda i sjön Drużno i norra Polen. Grodan var 4 cm lång och troligen en gölgröda *Rana lessonae* och detta är ett av de största kända bytena för en trastsångare (ungefär 22–23% av dess kropps massa). Tiden för hanteringen och sväljandet av bytet var minst 2 min 40 sekunder. Efteråt vilade sångaren i 34 minuter. Under denna tid satt den orörlig nära vattenytan med uppfluffade fjädrar, slutna ögon och hängande vingar. Ett så stort byte måste vara nära det största möjliga momentana energiintaget för en trastsångare, men kompenserade förmodligen väl tids- och energiåtgången för att få ner fångsten. Å andra sidan kan följden av sådan byteshantering dra till sig predatorers uppmärksamhet och vilan efteråt utgöra en fara eftersom uppmärksamheten är ned-satt. Så vitt vi vet är detta första gången som man registrerat en trastsångare konsumera ett så stort byte.

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Tofsvipa *Vanellus vanellus* häckande på kalhygge

Lapwing Vanellus vanellus breeding in a forest clear-cut

DAN LUNDBERG

Tofsvipan häckar i Sverige främst i jordbruksmark och på strandängar samt på myrar och hedar (Svensson m.fl. 1999). Den är en av många jordbruksarter som minskade kraftigt i antal i Sverige 1975–1990, men på senare tid har antalen varit ganska stabila (Wretenberg m.fl. 2007, Lindström m.fl. 2008). Arten är känd för att vara polygam, det vill säga en hane kan ha en eller flera honor (Cramp 1983). En kull består oftast av tre ägg som läggs i en en-