

NEW BREEDING SITE OF BLACK-WINGED STILTS *Himantopus himantopus* IN CROATIA

Novo gnjezdilište vlastelice Himantopus himantopus u Hrvatskoj

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Black-winged Stilts are scarce breeders in Croatia, with breeding sites on the island of Pag, the estuary of the river Neretva, salt works near Nin, and a few locations in the lowlands of Croatia. The total breeding population has been estimated to 45 – 80 pairs (RADOVIĆ & LESKOVAR 2013). They have not been recorded as a breeding species in the county of Istria in the past years (LUKAČ & STELKO 2016). The ornithological reserve Palud is located on the west coast of the county of Istria, located around 10 km from the town of Rovinj. It is a natural swamp connected to the sea by a canal.

During research in the ornithological reserve Palud in June 2018, 4 pairs of Stilts were observed sitting on nests. The total number of nests was not possible to count, because they were hidden in the reed, with no means to access them. The highest number of adults spotted at once was 16, while they were chasing off gulls and defending their nests, so the estimated number of breeding pair is 8. At the end of June, hatchlings were spotted from 3 nests, and from 1 approachable nest a pullus was ringed. In mid-August, 19 individual were seen, out of which more than a half were juveniles.

The closest other breeding site is Sečovlje salt works in Slovenia (MAKOVEC & ŠKORNIK 1990), located around 50km from Palud, while the closest breeding site in Croatia is on the salt works on the island of Pag, 120 km away. At the end of August, the dam that regulated water levels in the swamp was removed and the swamp flooded; as a result thereof, all the stilts left. If the dam is not replaced before the next breeding season, this might have a negative impact on the number of breeding pairs, or potentially no further stilts will breed there.

References

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SAŽETAK

Tijekom istraživanja u ornitološkom rezervatu Palud 2018. godine zabilježeno je gniježđenje vlastelice *Himantopus himantopus*. To je prvo zabilježeno gniježđenje vlastelice u Istarskoj županiji. Zabilježeno je 16 odraslih jedinki odjednom, kako tjeraju predatore, što ukazuje na 8 gnijezdećih parova. Najbliže mjesto gniježđenja Paludu je Sečovljanska solana u Sloveniji udaljena oko 50 km od Paluda, dok je najbliže mjesto u Hrvatskoj Paška solana udaljena oko 120 km. Ukoliko se ne zamijeni uklonjena brana iz rezervata, to bi moglo dovesti do smanjenja broja njihovih parova ili potpunog prestanka gniježđenja.