

THE ROLE OF GREAT CORMORANT (*PHALACROCORAX CARBO SINENSIS*)  
FOR FISH STOCK AND DISPERSAL OF HELMINTHES PARASITES  
IN THE CURONIAN LAGOON AREA

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**Summary.** The population trends, diet composition and helminthes fauna were investigated in the newly established colonies of great cormorant located at the coasts of the Curonian Lagoon of the Baltic Sea. The numbers of breeding birds have increased from 0 in the 1970s to about 10000 pairs in the 2000s. These newly formed colonies of great cormorant are among the largest in Europe. 25 fish species were identified in the diet composition of great cormorants. Freshwater fish species, mostly percids (*Percidae*) and cyprinids (*Cyprinidae*), dominate in the diet composition of birds in the Curonian Lagoon area, comprising more than 90% by number and biomass. 17 helminthes species were found in great cormorants. The recent establishment of great cormorant as a new and very abundant species was one of the determining factors for introduction of new parasite species in the Curonian Lagoon area. Nematode *Contraecaecum rudolphii*, potentially pathogenic for animals and people, and cestodes *Paradilepis scolecina*, which has caused fish disease dilepidosis revealed in bream (*Abramis brama*), were found in the Curonian Lagoon area in 2004.

**Keywords:** great cormorant, diet composition, helminthes fauna, Curonian Lagoon.