

NOTES * LÜHITEATED

Food storing behaviour of a Rook (Corvus frugilegus).

Künnivares kogub toidutagavarasid?

Jõgeva has excelled in its all-year high number of crows for the past couple of decades. Thereby citizens have become accustomed to providing breadcrumbs not only to pigeons, gulls and ducks but also to crows and jackdaws. Often may happen that close observations of birds might bring along surprises. Thus, on the 15th of March 2007 I was lucky to observe an exceptional behaviour of a Rook that was taking bread from the provider and hid it in the lawn in a nearby green area. For doing that, the bird excavated small holes in the soil and after placing the bread into the hole he covered it with small pieces of lawn deriving from beside. However, if the bird with the atypical species behaviour later returned to the storage sites, remained unknown.

Jaanus Aua

A nest of Hoopoe (Upupa epops) in Lääne-Virumaa.

Vaenukõo (Upupa epops) pesaleid Lääne-Virumaal.

Hoopoe is a vulnerable species and a local breeder whose population in Estonia has been estimated only up to 1-10 pairs (Hirundo 2/2003). Estonia is also the northern distribution range of this species. According to data obtained from bird databases and internet the most numerous encounters of hoopoe during the past 10 years have been made in Pärnu and Läänemaa. The majority of the observations have been made in coastal areas whereas somewhat fewer encounters have been made in inland. In Estonia, the last breeding attempt of the Hoopoe was registered in 1978 where a nest of 4 nestlings was found in Pärnumaa. There has also been registered a probable breeding of Hoopoe in 1981 in a shed in Tartu (Leho Luigujõe, unwritten data). Later on, a few territorial pairs have been observed in several places, however, no nests have been found so far.

This year, two different sources have been reporting to me about a breeding pair of Hoopoes together with a nest encounter. This

information derives from Eisma village in Vihula rural municipality in Lääne-Virumaa from a family, called Toms. A check-up verified the accuracy of the information. Data presented in this note is resting on the information obtained from the observers.

First encounter of the Hoopoe in Eisma village was made on the 16th of April. Afterwards no sight of the bird was registered until the beginning of June where one Hoopoe was feeding in the yard of a dwelling house. In mid-June two birds were being observed for the first time operating together. From that day on the birds became very active and could be seen almost every day. Mostly only one bird was sighted but often the pair was seen together. The birds were rather courageous and were neither intimidated by the people nor the dog moving in the yard. The birds were never observed making any sounds. However, the reason for that may lie in the time of the singing period that is in spring and during this period the observers made fewer visits to the observation site. Mostly the birds were seen feeding on the lawn, in the yard and only a few times in other places. Food that could be identified by mere sight was earthworms. Also once an observation was made where one adult passed an earthworm to another even though the other bird already was holding a worm. The birds were feeding in the yard during the second half of June. Every visit lasted 2-3 minutes and was followed by flying towards the nest and back again.

The nest location was determined at the end of June due to the loud noise of the nestlings. It was located in a deciduous forest patch between the road and the house. The nesting tree was a dead alder with a broken top located in the boundary of the forest patch. The nest was built either into a knothole or an old woodpecker nest cavity located 4-5 m from the ground. The opening of the nest was facing the house and probably in the Northeastern direction. On the 30th of June at least two nestlings were sighted begging food in the nest opening.

Last encounter of the Hoopoe in Eisma was made on the 7th of July near the nesting site where one of the recently fledged nestlings was sighted in the yard. The very last observation of the Hoopoe in the village was made on the 20th of July.

Riho Kinks