

## **URAL OWL *STRIX URALENSIS* FOOD COMPOSITION IN LATVIA: COMPARISON TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND HYPOTHETISATION ON THE DIFFERENCES**

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Ural Owl food composition in Eastern Latvia is studied non-continuously during 1989-2010 (Avotins jr. 2011). In total about 50 samples (nesting materials) are collected, covering more than 1 400 prey objects from at least 38 species identified. This amount allows to comprise differences in different breeding landscapes (agricultural forest mosaic with forest massive), between territories, breeding pairs and in time period in study areas.

Samples from Latvia were compared using total of prey object average biomass pooled in groups. Significant differences were found not only in geographically large distances (country level), but also in different landscapes located in the same country: in forest landscape Ural owl feeds significantly (Mann-Whitney U; p-value=0.05) more with birds, larger than Thrush, than in agricultural landscape in Latvia.

Of course Ural owl is food generalist, but it also is one of the highest raptors, with theoretically preferred food object size about 150 g, as found in here. This research is looking for differences in food composition during breeding season and hypothesises on aspects that could possibly affect them.

### **References**

Avotins A. jr., Avotins A. sen. 2011. Food composition of the Ural owl in Latvia. 8<sup>th</sup> European Ornithologist Union conference. Latvia. Riga.