

INDIVIDUAL WEIGHT DIFFERENCES OF MALLARDS *ANAS PLATYRHYNCHOS* (L.) IN LATVIA 2005-2011

Jānis Bētiņš

University of Latvia, Faculty of Biology

Address: Kronvalda bulv. 4, LV 1586, Riga, Latvia

e-mail: janis.betins@inbox.lv

Since 1993, hunters-bag survey has been conducted on seven sites in Latvia: Lake Engure, Lake Kaņieris, Lake Babīte, Lake Liepāja, Nagļi fishponds, ponds in Saldus district and ponds in Tukuma district. The aim was to obtain information about locally breeding and moulting mallard populations. Thus our observations were focused on the first weeks of hunting season in August when local populations are mostly hunted. Data from last 7 years have been used for general analysis. For some sites the data were insufficient or lacking, which hindered the analysis of real differences in mallard body mass from different parts of Latvia. During period from 2005 till 2011, 3878 weight measurements of mallards have been obtained. Individual data analysis has been made depending on age, sex and geographical location as well as annual and seasonal fluctuations. Significant differences were revealed between eastern (Nagļi) and western (Engure) parts of Latvia (e.g. adult mallards in 2008 were significantly heavier — on average 74 g, $p < 0.004$, t-test). There are possible explanations of such differences — feeding conditions, water level at the lake, inheritance and variances between populations.