

ABSTRACTS FOR *CONDOR* 103(3) AUGUST 2001

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

FORAGING BEFORE SPRING MIGRATION AND BEFORE BREEDING IN COMMON EIDERS: DOES HYPERPHAGIA OCCUR?

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Abstract. Foraging performance of Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) was studied to find out if hyperphagia occurs before migration and breeding in this species. Diving efficiency and time spent feeding were quantified concomitantly for two subspecies that differ in the timing of their reproduction and migration. The foraging performance of female *S. m. dresseri* preparing for breeding and female *S. m. borealis* preparing for migration were compared with their male counterparts, which are known to achieve energy balance during these periods. Female *dresseri* spent 41% of their time feeding and made 404 dives daily, for a total of 169 min spent underwater each day. Female *dresseri* spent more time diving than did males by about one hour each day. There were no detectable differences in the foraging performances of male and female *borealis*, probably because the body mass of migrating females increased only slightly prior to migration. Hyperphagia in breeding female *dresseri* appears to be the main cause of increased body mass, although other mechanisms may play a role.

Key words: Common Eider, foraging performance, migration, reproduction, *Somateria mollissima*.

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