

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

SEX-RELATED NATAL DISPERSAL OF PIED FLYCATCHERS: HOW FAR AWAY FROM HOME?

NIKITA CHERNETSOV^{1,2,3}, LEONID V. SOKOLOV¹, VLADISLAV KOSAREV¹, DMITRY LEOKE¹, MIKHAIL MARKOVETS¹, ARSENY TSVEY¹, AND ANATOLY P. SHAPOVAL¹

¹*Biological Station Rybachy, Rybachy 238535, Kaliningrad Region, Russia*

²*Department of Behavioral Ecology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Umultowska 89, PL-61-614 Poznan, Poland*

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³ E-mail: nchernetsov@bioryb.koenig.ru

Abstract. Over four years, nestling Pied Flycatchers (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) were banded and recaptured in nest boxes at a 44 km long and 1–1.5 km wide study area along the Courish Spit on the southeast Baltic coast. The return rate for males was nearly twice as high as for females. Males settled significantly closer to their natal sites than predicted by the null model, which assumed that any nest box in the study area was selected at random. For females, the frequency distribution of natal dispersal distances was not significantly different from that predicted by the null model. The difference in average dispersal distance between the sexes was highly significant. Although some individuals settled within tens of kilometers, most male Pied Flycatchers settled within several kilometers of their natal sites. We suggest that even if females settle on average farther from their natal sites than males do, both sexes imprint on a relatively small (several kilometers in diameter) area during postfledging exploration, to which they return each spring.

Key words: natal dispersal, Pied Flycatcher, return rate, sex bias.