the 20s of August, reverse westward passage of Gadwall towards wintering areas becomes noticeable. The flight directions of the flocks travelling from the Neva Bay area and from the Vyborg Bay converge by the northern peak of Kurgalsky Peninsula. Most of the birds leave the area in the first half of September, heading for Estonia – on some days up to 300 passage migrants can be sighted.

Gadwall has become one of the most numerous dabbling ducks in large wetlands in southern Gulf of Finland area, and the process of its expansion is far from being complete. It is supported by the above-mentioned phenomenon of post-breeding, non-breeding adult and young birds actively migrating in summertime beyond their breeding areas. This fact is corroborated by ringing data (Kharitonov, 2002). In addition, these temporary out-migrations reduce competition for food in the main breeding areas.

CAPERCAILLIE AND BLACK GROUSE ABUNDANCE IN TAIGA REGIONS OF NORTHERN EUROPE

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Data from winter track counts carried out from Finland to Komi Republic in 2000-2009 were analysed.

Higher and more stable **black grouse abundance** rates were recorded from Eastern Fennoscandia (Finland-4.4, Karelia – 3.6 birds/10 km; coefficients of variation – 27% and 12%, respectively). The rates in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Regions were 0.5 and 2.5 birds/10 km, respectively, and the coefficients of variation – 56 and 20%. For **capercaillie**, the highest abundance rates were found in Finland, the lowest – in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk Regions. Capercaillie abundance in Komi Republic was similar to the mean in the European North (0.36), but most stable.

The **years of "peak" and lowest abundance** of capercaillie and black grouse differ among regions of the North European taiga zone.

General trends in the abundance dynamics of both species in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Regions coincide in the two regions (positive correlation, quite high for capercaillie – 0.83). In Finland and Karelia in 2000-2009 the trends showed reliably negative correlation with those in Arkhangelsk Region (-0.6 for black grouse), and weakly positive correlation with each other. The abundance of both species in the north of Europe differed also in its among-year dynamics.

WETLAND BIRDS STAGING IN OLONETS AREA (REPUBLIC OF KARELIA, RUSSIA) IN SPRING

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Large spring staging areas of wetland birds along the Baltic-White Sea flyway are concentrated in eastern Ladoga area. There are several of them, but the principal one is located in the farmland near the town of Olonets (Karelia). The main results of studies of Anser and Branta geese, for which this staging area is the main one before the departure for breeding areas,