

Abstract

Incubation of avian eggs is an energy demanding process. Incubating parent faces a conflict between investment into optimal thermal conditions for developing embryos and meeting of own energy requirements. This applies especially in uniparental incubators such as ducks. During incubation, female utilizes energy from fat storage or actual food intake. The proportion of energy used from food than may reflect the time spent by female on the nest. The utilizing of these both sources ratio plays a role in time spent on nest.

The aim of the thesis was to describe an incubation rhythm in females of Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) and relate them to climatic variables and changes in body mass. Data were collected for three years in the Poodří Landscape Protected Area at free-living females. We placed a weighting mechanism under the nest with connected datalogger recording voltage variations, which offered me an information about female body mass and time and duration of recesses.

Incubation rhythm of females was described by time spent on time („incubation constancy“), recess frequency and recess duration. Females left the nest most frequently at night-time and during dawn and dusk. Probable explanation of this pattern is better food availability in the night-time and lower risk of nest predation by predators foraging by sight and their skills are restricted at time of dawn and dusk.

Keywords: incubation rhythm, Common Pochard, *Aythya ferina*, body mass, incubation constancy, recess frequency, recess duration