

Labanoras, woodpecker banquet

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Last Updated Saturday, 04 March 2017

Though nine species of woodpecker breed in Lithuania, several have restricted ranges, occur in very low densities and are listed in the country's Red Data Book. For whatever the reason, in the course of an average year's birding, I would rarely see more than four or five species, perhaps six if I was lucky.

Wouldn't it be nice if that situation were to change! It had been my intention with the creation of a reserve to establish a feeding station that might attract in a few of these species, perhaps even one of the rarer ones! However, even in my wildest imagination, I could never have prepared myself for success that was to follow! The story begins back in the autumn of 2004 ...setting eyes upon the woodland at the heart of my soon-to-be reserve, the forest just screamed 'woodpecker'! I had found all the ingredients I was hoping for - a mix of mature deciduous trees, a lot of dead standing wood and a mosaic of habitats from dry woodland through to flood forest, the latter being alders and birches standing in a metre of water.

Step one was to establish the feeding station, a quiet spot on the divide between the dry and wet woodlands, step two was to wait. Soon the birds would arrive...

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