

obserwowano kopulacje, a nawet wykryto dziuplę, przy której widziano samca (np. koło Jasła w 2019 r.), lecz później syczki znikły (Stawarczyk i in. 2017; Krzyśków 2025). Dzięki odnotowaniu w roku 2025 udanego lęgu tej sowy status gatunku zmienił się na lęgowy.

Po raz pierwszy 26 czerwca 2025 roku obecność pary lęgowej stwierdził Tomasz Szczansny. Wcześniej, od 25 maja, udało się zarejestrować tylko głosy pojedynczych osobników. Z pomocą specjalisty od sów Sławomira Rubacha 19 lipca udało się wykryć dziuplę w olszy czarnej, niewidoczną z dołu. Para syczków, z której samiec był barwy szarej, a samica rudej, opiekowała się wspólnie potomstwem. Samica w pierwszych dniach po wykluciu piskląt zajmowała się młodymi, a samiec troszczył się o dostarczenie pożywienia – niemal bez przerwy donosił pokarm nawet do stu razy w ciągu nocy. Pokarm trafiający do dziupli był bardzo zróżnicowany – od pająków i pasikoników po drobne gryzonie. W czasie wychowywania lęgu panowała głównie deszczowa i chłodna pogoda. Dzięki termowizji i zainstalowanej fotopułapce udało się obu autorom określić terytorium łowieckie syczków i zarejestrować opuszczenie dziupli przez młodego ptaka oraz karmienie go poza gniazdem (Szczansny 2025).

The Eurasian Scops Owl (*Otus scops*) is a small owl, approximately 20 cm in length, with a wingspan of 49–54 cm. The male has a mass of 77–105 g (average 83 g) and the female 90–115 g (average 98 g). Its bark-colored plumage makes it difficult to spot in its daily habitat. Two color forms are distinguished: rufous and grey. Its „ears” are

relatively short and can be „folded,” giving the head a rounded appearance. This owl lives in warm and dry, rather open habitats covered with old trees, e.g. park-type habitats, in orchards and gardens, on the edges of thinned deciduous stands offering a rich food base in the form of grasshoppers, beetles and other large insects and small mammals (up to the size of a dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*).

The presence of tree hollows, wall openings, or suitable nesting boxes with an entrance opening of approximately 8 cm is also necessary (Mikkola 1983; Mebs i Scherzinger 2012). The scops owl is distributed throughout the Mediterranean countries and North Africa, southeastern Europe, from Asia Minor to Lake Baikal, and in Iraq and Iran to Afghanistan. The northern limit of its range in Europe runs through central France and Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, and southern Russia. North of the Alps, it appears rarely and in small numbers, and its breeding is recorded sporadically. In 1960, at least one breeding was recorded in Franconia, Germany, and in 2003 in Rhineland-Palatinate. In 1998, the first breeding pair was detected in the Czech Republic.

Its population in six Central European countries at the beginning of the 21st century was estimated at a total of approximately 679 pairs. Of these, 12–15 pairs inhabited Switzerland, 40–60 pairs were in Austria, 40–80 pairs in Slovakia, 0–4 pairs in the Czech Republic, 3 pairs in Germany, and the most numerous (500–600 pairs) it nested in Hungary (Mebs and Scherzinger 2012). In 2013–2016, the breeding population in Switzerland was estimated at 30–

40 pairs, nesting at altitudes from 200 to 1500 m above sea level (Knaus *et al.* 2018). Monitoring conducted in 2024 in the canton of Valais detected 78–82 scops owl territories, including 36 pairs and 46 singing males. Breeding pairs occupied there at least 15 nest boxes and the young fledged from late June to early August. In the southernmost Swiss canton of Tessin (Ticino), monitoring revealed the presence of 11 territories (Müller 2025). In the summer of 2025, as many as 19 breeding pairs and territories of this rare owl were detected in 14 districts located in five southern German states (König *et al.* 2025).

Finally, in 2025, the first nesting pair of scops owls was confirmed in Poland. This occurred in Wodzisław District in Upper Silesia. Previously, scops owl pairs had been recorded several times in various locations across the country, copulations had been observed, and even a tree hollow had been discovered in 2019 near Jasło where a male had been observed but later on scops owls disappeared (Stawarczyk *et al.* 2017; Krzyśków 2025). The year 2025 is considered the first year in which a successful breeding of this owl was recorded, changing its status to breeding in Poland. The presence of a breeding pair was first recorded on June 26, 2025. Earlier (from May 25), Tomasz Szczansny, the „discoverer” of the scops owl, had only managed to record the calls of single individuals. On July 19, T. Szczansny and Sławomir Rubacha (ornithologist specializing in owls) discovered a tree hollow (invisible from below) in a black alder. The observed scops owl partners differed in plumage: the male was grey, while the female was rufous. In the first days after hatching, the female cared for the young while the male was bringing food almost nonstop – up to a hundred times a night. The adult birds brought a wide variety of

food to the nest cavity, from spiders and grasshoppers to small rodents. During the brood-raising period, unfavorable weather conditions prevailed: it was chilly and rainy. Using thermal imaging, the installed camera trap, both authors managed to define the scops owl's hunting territory and document the young bird leaving the nest cavity and feeding outside the nest (Szczansny 2025)

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