

Feather development in the chicks of Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus*

LUCYNA PILACKA¹, WŁODZIMIERZ MEISSNER¹ & NATALIA KARLIONOVA²

¹*Avian Ecophysiology Unit, Dept. of Vertebrate Ecology & Zoology, Univ. of Gdańsk,
Al. Legionów 9, 80-441, Gdańsk, Poland. lucyna.pilacka@gmail.com*

²*Institute of Zoology, NAS Belarus, 27 Akademichnaya Str., Minsk 220072, Belarus*

Pilacka, L., Meissner, W. & Karlionova, N. 2009. Feather development in the chicks of Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus*. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 116(3): 152–156.

Keywords: feather development, chicks, waders, Northern Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*, ageing

In this study, carried out during 2006–2008 in the valley of the middle Pripyat River, S Belarus, the feather development of Northern Lapwing chicks was described in detail. Chicks were ringed on the day they hatched. Later they were recaptured and their plumage and feather growth stages were described. Seven age classes were identified. The first was downy chicks, 1–7 days old, with no visible growing feathers. Older age classes were distinguished according to the stage of development of different feather tracts. These observations, coupled with biometric data, provide a valuable means of ageing Northern Lapwing chicks.