

N O T E

Macroinvertebrate Occurrence in *Chlidonias niger* (Charadriiformes: Laridae) Nests in East-Central Poland¹

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Many publications report the invertebrate fauna of nests of birds, which provide a seasonally rich source of organic material in a sheltered habitat, thus providing ecological opportunities for a diversity of species. Most studies are on the nests of terrestrial birds (Karasawa and Hijii 2006, *Biodivers. Conserv.* 15: 4533–4553; Oppliger et al. 1994, *Behav. Ecol.* 5: 130–134; Saino et al. 2002, *Oecologia* 133: 139–145), but little information has been published on macroinvertebrates in the nests of aquatic birds (Coulson et al. 2009, *Polar Biol.* 32: 1041–1046; Tajovsky et al. 2001, *Eur. J. Soil Biol.* 37: 321–323), which are largely limited to species that construct nests in dry sites using feathers or dried plant matter. Hence, there is no information on invertebrates inhabiting nests constructed on a moist substrate from rotting vegetation, such as those made by terns of the genus *Chlidonias*.

Black terns, *Chlidonias niger* (L.) (Charadriiformes: Laridae), construct their nests from fragments of leaves of aquatic plants, very often of water soldier (*Stratiotes aloides* L.) (Golawski et al. 2016, *Aquat. Ecol.*, doi: 10.1007/s10452-016-9613-0), a pleustonic species in the family Hydrocharitaceae, whose range of distribution includes central, eastern, and northern Europe and central Asia (Cook and Urmi-Konig 1983, *Aquat. Bot.* 16: 213–249). Water soldier is a convenient habitat for invertebrates, serving both as shelter and food resource (Obolewski 2005, *Oceanol. Hydrobiol. Stud.* 34: 37–54; Tarkowska-Kukuryk 2006, *Pol. J. Ecol.* 54: 441–451). The epiphytic fauna of water soldier consists mainly of chironomid (Diptera: Chironomidae) larvae, but varied assemblages of animals have been reported from this microhabitat (Tarkowska-Kukuryk 2006; Obolewski and Strzelczak 2009, *Ecohydrol. Hydrobiol.* 9: 257–267). Black terns build their nests on a mat of floating water soldier leaves, which decay over time. The underside of the nest is submerged and, as it slowly sinks into the water, the birds add fresh

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