



POPULATION OF *DACTYLORHIZA INCARNATA* (L.) SOÓ (ORCHIDACEAE)
IN SOUTH-WESTERN PART OF POZNAŃ (“KOPANINA I”) – RESULTS OF MONITORING
IN THE YEARS 1997-2009

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ABSTRACT. Monitoring of population of *Dactylorhiza incarnata* within the former ecological useland “Kopanina I” was carried out in the years 1997-2009. The changes in numerical force of orchid population including participation of vegetative and generative specimens and variability of morphological traits of plants were investigated. The species composition of vegetation with *D. incarnata* was also determined. The analysed population of orchid was a component of meadow association of *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* class with differentiated degree of soil-moisture. The population of *D. incarnata* was in a good condition. Predominance of generative individuals and plants with medium height was certified to this observation. However, this population was submitted to strong, periodic fluctuations of numerical force. It probably resulted from species biology. The activities neutralizing overgrowing its sites by other plants should be undertaken.

KEY WORDS: *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, variability, morphology, vegetation, Poznań

INTRODUCTION

Dactylorhiza incarnata (L.) Soó (Orchidaceae) has a wide Eurosiberian range, including Caucasus and Asia Minor. It is distributed almost in all Europe, with the exception of the coolest regions – northern Scandinavian Peninsula – and of the driest and the warmest ones: Iberian, Apennine and Balkan Peninsulas (SZLACHETKO 2001, PIĘKOŚ-MIRKOWA and MIREK 2003). It is quite a common species in Poland, except of Śląsk and mountain regions. Most of its described sites come from northern and centrally-northern parts of the country. This plant has also numerous sites in the Wielkopolska and Pomorze regions (ATLAS... 2001). It is a characteristic element of many sedge marshy meadows, lowland and transitional peat bogs, as well as of moor grass meadows, more rarely of reeds and alder swamps. Most frequently *D. incarnata* populations consist of several or more than ten specimens and locally even to a several hundred ones (PIĘKOŚ-MIRKOWA and MIREK 2003).

Dactylorhiza incarnata is not a species threatened with extinction in Poland, but number of its sites is systematically growing smaller and locally its populations may be endangered (ATLAS... 2001). ŻUKOWSKI and JACKOWIAK (1995) classified this orchid as a species threatened with extinction in the Wielkopolska region. Similarly, BERNACKI (1998) included it among

endangered species of vascular plants of the Górny Śląsk region. On the other hand this author recognised *D. incarnata* as critically endangered species of the western Beskidy Mts. and northern tectonic foreland of this region (BERNACKI 1999). Now this orchid is classified as critically endangered species of the whole Polish part of Karpaty Mts. (BERNACKI 2008). The drainage, bringing about overgrowing the natural sites of orchids by thickets and high perennials, is the main danger of *D. incarnata* existence (PIĘKOŚ-MIRKOWA and MIREK 2003).

According to JACKOWIAK (1993) there had been 14 sites of *D. incarnata* in evidence within Poznań up to 1993, including five historical localities of this plant. During the floristic investigations a new site of this orchid was found in spring of 1996 in the south-western part of Poznań, within contemporary ecological useland “Kopanina I” (KLUZA and MACIEJEWSKA 1998, KRÓL et AL. 1998). Since 1997 this local population of *D. incarnata* had been monitored. The goal of current work was to recapitulate thirteen-years’ investigations on the *D. incarnata* growing on the mentioned area. The changes in numerical force of orchid population, including participation of vegetative and generative specimens and variation of individual traits (height of plants, length of inflorescences, number of flowers per inflorescence and number of leaves) had been analysed. The species composition of vegetation with *D. incarnata* had been also determined. The results of this study allowed to answer

the question whether orchid population was endangered within the investigated object. They were also useful in estimating solution to neutralize adverse site conditions, inducing orchid disappearance and to propose methods of population protection.

STUDY AREA

Investigated object is situated in the south-western part of Poznań (former ecological useland "Kopalinia I"), between 16°51'14" and 16°51'33" of eastern longitude and 52°22'35" and 52°22'42" of northern latitude. It comprises flat area, from the north limited by the Baczkowski lake and from the south by the steep slope, near the railway tracks. The analysed population of *D. incarnata* occupy area of 2.5 ha, 480 m alongshore of the pond. The largest number of specimens appears in the central part of the object, about 20 m of the Baczkowski lake ($\pm 2/3$ of population). The other ones grow near the edge of pond (Fig. 1).

METHODS

Since 1997 to 2009, with the exception of 2006-2007, monitoring of *D. incarnata* population was carried out from the beginning of orchid vegetation till the end of it. Each year number of specimens, including participation of vegetative and generative ones, was determined. The height of plants was measured every season of observation too. Besides, since 1998 the length of inflorescences was measured and number of flowers per inflorescence was counted. In the second and two last years of monitoring the number of leaves per stem was determined.

The received data were statistically analysed (KALA 1996). Arithmetic mean, median, variance, standard deviation and variation coefficient were calculated and minimal and maximal values were determined for at least 30 plants per every year of observations.

During 6-11 July 2008 a detailed inventory of orchid population was done, using GPS (WGS 84 system). Single plant or group of orchid specimens being nearby were central points of geographical coordinates. Besides,

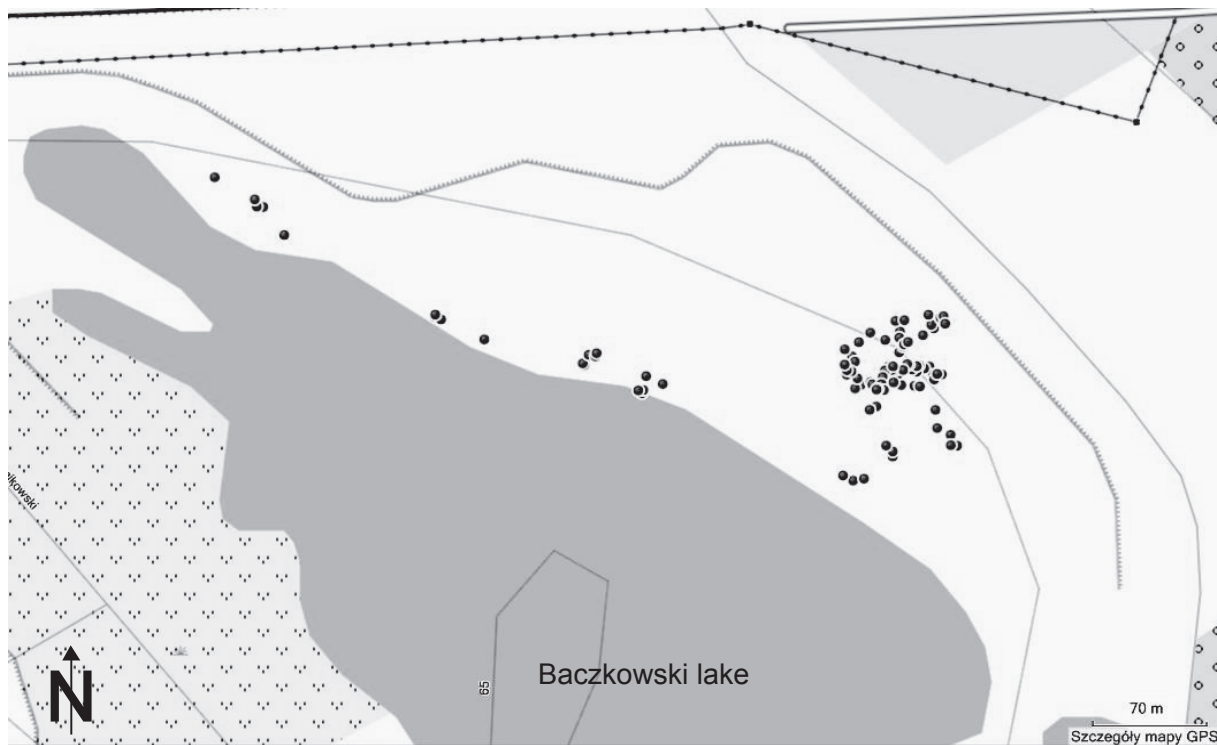


FIG. 1. Area of investigation and distribution of *D. incarnata* population
• – specimens of investigated orchid.

The object is located on the area of inactive excavations of loam and clay, along the valley of the Junikowski stream (left side stream of the Warta river). Exploitation of ceramic resources was run from the end of XIX to the 70th of last century. Now mosaic of diverse plant communities, as: rushes, meadows, blackthorn and willow thickets and fragments of alluvial forests covers this area. For many years numerous clay-pits have been inviting to local inhabitants, as an attractive area of angling and swimming, so vegetation has been submitted to strong anthropopressure (KRÓL et AL. 1998, KLUZA and MACIEJEWSKA 1999).

for each localization species composition of other vascular plants growing together with *D. incarnata* was noted. Each record (together 95 ones) was carried out on the area of about 3.14 m² (Table 1), using Braun-Blanquet's method.

The species terminology following MIREK et AL. (2002) was applied and classification of plant communities following BRZEG and WOJTERSKA (1996) was used.

RESULTS

Population of *D. incarnata* was a component of meadow community of *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* class (Table 1). Many characteristic species connected with this class and its syntaxa in the range of alliance (*Filipendulion*) and orders (*Arrhenatheretalia* and *Molinietalia*) proved this observation. On the other hand there were only two characteristic species of meadow associations (*Arrhenatherum elatius* and *Galium mollugo*), with low degree of constancy. Therefore unequivocal diagnosis of type of phytocenosis was very difficult. But the different humidity variants of meadow community might be observed basing on species composition. High participation of two species of rushes *Phragmites australis* and *Carex acutiformis* (*Phragmitetea australis* class), as well as of *Equisetum palustre* – species permanently or at least periodically connected with moist meadows and associations of high perennials (*Molinietalia* order) – was noted in the most humid sites. An increase of humidity was also connected with the increase of cover coefficient of *Carex flacca* and *Epipactis palustris* – species of *Scheuchzerio-Caricetea nigrae* class. While participation of *Briza media* (*Molinio-Arrhenatheretea*) was increased in more dried sites.

Phragmites australis was characterised by the highest cover coefficient as well as 5th degree of constancy among all noted vascular plants. Next, *Carex flacca*, *C. acutiformis* and *Equisetum palustre* had relatively high values of both indicators too. Therefore species related to grass and sedge rushes and wet meadows were of great importance in the meadow association of investigated object. The high value of cover coefficient (together with 2nd-3th degree of constancy) was observed at *Briza media* and at *Rubus caesius* (species typical of nitrophilous herbs on the margins of water basins – *Convolutetalia sepium* order, *Artemisietea vulgaris* class). Additionally, *Eupatorium cannabinum* – species of clearing sites (*Atropion belladonnae* alliance, *Epilobietea angustifolii* class) – was often observed. Plants representing syntaxa of nine classes (*Molinio-Arrhenatheretea*, *Phragmitetea australis*, *Scheuchzerio-Caricetea nigrae*, *Artemisietea vulgaris*, *Epilobietea angustifolii*, *Alnetea glutinosae*, *Festuco-Brometea*, *Artemisietea vulgaris*, *Rhamno-Prunetea*) formed characteristic species combination of investigated area. At least 40% of them had very low value of cover coefficient and as usual were growing singly. Specially it referred to the following classes: *Alnetea glutinosae*, *Festuco-Brometea*, *Artemisietea vulgaris* (except of *Rubus caesius*) and *Rhamno-Prunetea*. Similarly, the plants from the group of accompanying species were observed occasionally.

Numerical force of *D. incarnata* population underwent significant fluctuations, depending on the year of observation (Table 2). In first year of investigations (1997) 66 specimens were noted, next year 223 and since then population began to decrease rapidly. Then in 2003 it attained maximal value for all the time of monitoring (433 specimens). But one year later no orchid plant was noted, even in juvenile phase. Next year (2005) up to 2008 progressive increase of population number was observed again. In last year (2009) only four specimens were verified. For the whole period of

investigations on average 118 orchid plants occurred per season. They were scattered in small groups, each one with two-eight individuals. Throughout the entire time of monitoring, with the except of 2008, when about 14% of population was represented by vegetative specimens, almost all observed specimens of *D. incarnata* flowered and only sporadically plants without flowers were noted.

On average height of particular specimens was 34.24 cm and fluctuated from 10 cm (1997) to 70 cm (2002) for all time of observation (Table 3). Median analysis showed plants 33 cm high were most often met. On the other hand comparative analysis of standard deviation and variance revealed predominance of specimens with the height nearing arithmetic mean. Hence, the distribution of this trait was normal in population, but at the same time it was characterised by relatively large variation. With respect to height the most similar plants were noted in second year of observation, and the most diverse ones in 2005.

On the average the length of inflorescence was 6.52 cm – about 20% whole length of plant, with extreme values 1.5 cm ($\pm 4.4\%$ whole length of plant; 1998) and 7 cm ($\pm 44.4\%$; 2005; Table 3). This trait was also very variable. The most strongly variation of it revealed in 2008. On the other hand length of inflorescence was the most equalized in 2005.

On the average single inflorescence of *D. incarnata* consisted of 23 flowers, with minimum value five in 2005 and maximum 57 in 2001 (Table 3). Besides, number of flowers per inflorescence was inversely correlated with its length and just as length of inflorescence this trait was the most equalized in 2005, but the most variable in 2002.

Number of leaves per plant seemed to be constant, that way it was omitted after first year of observations. However, the year before last this trait was analysed again. On the average 4.25 leaves per plants were noted, with maximum six and minimum two (Table 3). The value of the variation coefficient of the number of leaves was the smallest among all the investigated traits.

DISCUSSION

According to JACKOWIAK (1993) 13 populations of *D. incarnata* from northern part of Poznań agglomeration are components of natural vegetation and only one population is an element of seminatural vegetation. On the other hand currently analysed population of orchid is an element of vegetation forming on post-mining area, during secondary succession. So, there are secondary phytocenoses within "Kopanina I", but consisting of species with populations genetically connected with the other populations of these taxa, growing on natural sites in the valley of the Junikowski stream.

BRZEG and WOJTERSKA (1996) determine *D. incarnata* to be a characteristic species of *Caricion davallianae* alliance. According to PIĘKOŚ-MIRKOWA and MIREK (2003) this orchid grows in low-sedge communities of marshy meadow and lowland and transitional peatbogs (*Scheuchzerio-Caricetum nigrae* class), as well as in moor grass meadow (*Molinietalia* order), rarely in rushes (*Phragmitetea* class) and in alder swamps

TABLE 2. Numerical force of *D. incarnata* population within Kopanina in 1997-2009

Year of investigation	Number of generative specimens	Number of vegetative specimens	Total number of specimens
1997	65	1	66
1998	223	0	223
1999	33	0	33
2000	94	1	95
2001	90	0	90
2002	135	0	135
2003	433	0	433
2004	0	0	0
2005	50	0	50
2008	150	24	174
2009	4	0	4

(*Alnetea glutinosae* class). Then BEDNORZ and GOLIS (2000) observed *D. incarnata* in *Caricetum paniculatae* association, with *Carex paniculata* as a dominant species. Besides, this community was mainly formed by species of *Phragmitetea* class, with significant participation of species of *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* class. However, in currently investigated object the species of *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* class prevailed. Characteristic species of *Phragmitetea* class were of great importance in the phytocenosis structure too, especially in the most humid sites.

During the whole period of monitoring significant differences in numerical force of *D. incarnata* population among particular years were noted. Observed fluctuations of specimen number might result from species biology. Members of Orchidaceae family often remain in resting state and do not appear one year or longer. If site conditions are favourable in future they can appear in a great number again (SZLACHETKO 1995). According to FALIŃSKA (1996), however, it may be an effect of population disorders, because in well-balanced plant communities long-term dynamics of particular populations of perennials characterise small fluctuations of numerical force or gradual, directional changes.

In RABOTNOV'S opinion (1950) the better growth conditions of given species induce forcing of life cycle of its specimens. Maximal participation of flowering plants is also an indicator of growth rate. Current study confirmed this observation, because generative specimens predominated in the whole period of the investigations. Then VAKHRAMEEV and TATARENKO (1998) state participation of generative individuals is significantly increasing in disturbed systems. They just determine reproductive potential, both in a view of fructification and ability to formation of runners (SYMONIDES 1974).

Though morphological traits of the analysed population of *D. incarnata* were very variable (especially height of plants, length of inflorescence and number

TABLE 3. Statistical characteristics of morphological traits of *D. incarnata* in the years of monitoring

Year	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mediana	Variance	Standard deviation	Variation coefficient (%)
Height of plants (cm)							
1997	29.79	15.0	52.0	29.50	68.69	8.23	27.61
1998	28.86	13.5	52.0	26.75	97.65	9.79	33.91
1999	37.32	20.0	54.0	36.00	100.12	9.85	26.40
2000	33.15	10.0	57.0	34.00	149.22	12.09	36.47
2001	31.50	12.0	61.0	31.25	129.31	11.18	35.49
2002	44.79	21.0	71.0	42.00	150.36	12.14	27.10
2003	32.86	14.5	64.0	32.00	97.53	9.78	29.75
2005	37.49	13.0	70.0	33.75	229.19	14.99	39.98
2008	31.17	10.0	60.0	30.00	114.60	10.67	34.20
2009	35.50	32.0	38.0	-	-	-	-
Length of inflorescence (cm)							
1998	5.41	3.0	9.0	5.00	1.92	1.37	25.37
1999	8.18	5.0	13.0	8.00	5.00	2.20	26.91
2000	5.50	3.0	9.0	5.50	2.32	1.51	27.43
2001	5.57	2.5	9.5	5.25	3.86	1.93	34.66
2002	7.85	4.0	15.0	7.50	6.45	2.51	32.03
2003	6.74	3.5	12.0	7.00	3.95	1.97	29.20
2005	8.45	5.0	15.0	8.50	3.71	1.91	22.56
2008	5.56	1.5	13.0	5.00	4.02	2.00	35.91
2009	5.50	5.0	6.0	-	-	-	-
Number of flowers							
1998	23.31	10	39.0	20.50	74.88	8.57	36.77
1999	23.36	7.0	39.0	23.00	53.86	7.23	30.94
2000	24.41	7.0	51.0	24.00	110.00	10.38	42.53
2001	25.63	11.0	44.0	26.00	69.27	8.18	31.93
2002	22.72	8.0	57.0	20.00	108.90	10.33	45.47
2003	25.06	14.0	48.0	24.00	64.38	7.94	31.17
2005	19.76	8.0	34.0	19.00	28.39	5.27	26.69
2008	20.91	5.0	48.0	20.00	82.15	9.03	43.19
2009	23.00	15.0	34.0	-	-	-	-
Number of leaves							
1998	4.08	4.0	6.0	4.00	0.11	0.33	8.11
2008	3.92	2.0	6.0	4.00	0.64	0.80	20.34
2009	4.75	4.0	5.0	-	-	-	-

of flowers per inflorescence), distributions of their values were normal and their ranges of variability did not stray from other data of this species in literature (BEDNORZ and GOLIS 2000, SZLACHETKO 2001). According to SNAGOVSKA (1966) domination of plants with medium height evidenced optimal site conditions and in current investigations such plants prevailed. FALIŃSKA (1990) considered that bad site conditions might cause poor formation of specimens and predominance of medium size individuals in population proved its stabilization.

Dactylorhiza incarnata is a very variable species, dividing into many subspecies, varieties and forms (TUTIN et AL. 1980, PROCHÁZKA and VELÍSEK 1983, STACE 1997). In BEDNORZ's and GOLIS's investigations (2000) on this taxon over Mielno lake near Konin town, its population had got longer inflorescences, but with smaller number of flowers per inflorescence, than actually examined population of orchid from "Kopanina I". It confirmed the observation from the current study, that the length of inflorescence was inversely proportional to the number of its flowers. Population from Konin had more leaves than the described population from "Kopanina I". Besides, there were few generative specimens within its population, while these ones prevailed in the population from "Kopanina I".

Strong, uncontrolled anthropopressure, resulting from localization of the investigated area within the Poznań city, may negatively influence *D. incarnata* population. The vegetation near the Baczkowski lake is subjected to wearing down. There are many paths running through the area of the orchid population, used by anglers, fans of swimming and even drivers. Every year the dumping grounds of garbages and waste building material are observed. Finally, burning of vegetation often takes place here. However, JACKOWIAK (1993) stated *D. incarnata* as characterised by a considerable resistance to anthropogenic factors and be able to grow in degenerated seminatural and natural phytocenoses. Moreover, JACKOWIAK and CELKA (1997) noticed the possibilities of maintenance, but also appearance and survival of new populations of vulnerable species even in urban agglomeration. According to ADAMOWSKI and CONTI (1991) an open area or disturbance of soil conditions are conductive to orchid expansion.

Entire desistance from meadow use is one of the most important dangers for many species of orchids, strictly connected with meadow and peat vegetation (WELLS and WILLEMS 1991, WYRZYKIEWICZ-RASZEWSKA 2001, 2002, BEDNORZ and GOLIS 2001). These plants are photophilous, so covering their sites with high sedges and grasses, as well as trees and shrubs is a serious threat of their existence (ELLENBERG 1974, ZARZYCKI 1984). So, total lack of any form of active protection taking under investigated area raises misgivings. This local population of *D. incarnata* may disappear in future as a result of expansion of rush vegetation or of *Rubus caesius* and the other shrubby species. Mowing at the end of the summer would make its living conditions better within the area of "Kopanina I".

CONCLUSIONS

1. Strong anthropopressure, resulting from localization of investigated area within Poznań agglomeration, may negatively influence on *D. incarnata* population in future. However actually it is in good condition. Predominance of generative specimens and of medium height ones proves it.

2. Investigations revealed length of inflorescence was inversely proportional to number of its flowers.

3. Forms of active protection neutralizing overgrowth of *D. incarnata* sites by other plants should be undertaken.

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