



Bird Station Manual

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May be ordered online for \$36.00 (includes postage and handling) from the publisher at seen@univ.gda.pl.—To begin with, the title of this work clearly should be “Bird *Migration* Station Manual,” because there is no general overview of bird-banding stations and their goals, and little or no information on such critical topics as molt, ageing and sexing birds in the hand, color banding studies, or analyses of productivity and survivorship. Instead, this manual reviews methods and results of banding stations operated in the Baltic countries (mostly the author’s native Poland) strictly for bird migration monitoring.

Immediately apparent as one opens the manual is the clipped and unedited English. It can border on abysmal at times; the first sentence of Appendix 1 reads, “In some ringing manuals other methods than described here as a standard methods of the bird holding, are described and shown at illustrations.” For the most part, the terminology is not this tangled, however, and after several pages I did not notice it any more. There are a few repeated cases of misconstrued words (“compatibility” for “comparability”, “elaboration” for “calibration”, etc.), but in general the text is quite understandable, and typographical errors are few if not absent. The multilingual, central European readership may find the clipped English in *Bird Station Manual* easier to understand, much as Americans have an easier time communicating with Mexican *indigenos* than with those of direct Spanish lineage. Certainly, the choppy English should not reflect poorly on the quality of the information presented.

The manual covers both data-collection methods and the application of collected data, especially for passerines. General topics include trapping techniques and laboratory equipment, arranging and documenting a station, running and removing birds from nets, directional preference methods and results, and analytical and modeling procedures to investigate such subjects as seasonal dynamics of migration, variation in wing morphology, localization of breeding origin based on biometrics, and long-term trends as revealed by capture data. Most sections are thorough, detailed, sprinkled with attractive and helpful tables, graphs, and illustrations (by Tomasz Cofta), and summarized with useful conclusions. A few sections are sparse and outdated, giving the impression that the chapters were written over the course of many years, if not several decades (over 50% of the references in the literature cited, other than those of the author, are from the 1970s or earlier). The need for Appendix 1 (interestingly located in the center of the book), which largely updates information in the initial chapters, is not apparent, and there is a wayward and largely redundant section on wader trapping and banding. Coverage of diurnal raptors, a group much more subject to migration monitoring than waders, is lacking.

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Bird Station Manual.—Przemyslaw Busse. 2000. Southeast European Bird Migration Network, University of Gdansk, Choczewo, Poland. 264 pp., 89 text figures, 22 tables. ISBN 83-86230-78-9. Cloth.

Most of the presented information is sound, although I disagree with a few scattered points. The recommendation that all banders hold passerines with the right hand, contrary to what most of us right-handers are accustomed, is baffling to me, and I cannot agree that casualties should be quickly buried (“to avoid bitter comment from the public”) rather than donated to the nearest specimen collection. But I agree with the thorough attention to standardization practices, the consideration of all possible biases, and the frequent concerns for the welfare of the birds found throughout the book.

The author’s strengths clearly lie with the topics of orientation studies and analytical procedures, such as computer-generated correlative topography, aimed at identifying different populations within a capture data set. The discovery by the author and his colleagues that nocturnal migrants maintain similar orientation patterns during the day, allowing rapid collection of directional data without having to feed and keep birds overnight, could open up a new era of orientation studies. The statistical procedures used (e.g. to differentiate nine separate peaks of Willow Warbler [*Phylloscopus trochilus*] passage in the fall) are very instructive, although the omission of weather and age- and sex-group data in this and other analyses throughout the book is disappointing. Still, anyone operating a migration monitoring station would benefit from these chapters, and would likely glean useful tidbits and perspectives from the other chapters, as well.

North American banding has undertaken a long and somewhat painful evolution, from the full-scale migration blitzes (“Operation Recovery”) and largely recreational banding that characterized the 1950s and 1960s, to the focused and research-oriented banding (as exemplified by the low-effort, high-yield data now being collected on breeding birds at MAPS stations) that is mandated today. Long ago the Bird Banding Laboratory and most North American ornithologists realized that recreational and unstandardized banding efforts, although fun and educational to a shallow degree, could no longer justify the time, expense, and disturbance to birds. Within this continuum *Bird Station Manual* lags a bit behind center, at best. The author makes several pleas for the continuation of migration monitoring, but admits that data from the 900,000+ birds banded from 1961 to present during Operation Baltic (their version of Operation Recovery) have been poorly evaluated.

Developing technology, such as satellite transmitters and molecular genetic techniques, will enable us to answer the questions proposed in *Bird Station Manual* with far less time and effort, if not expense. Thus, whereas banders involved with the few migration monitoring stations (such as those recently and not-so-recently established in southern Canada to monitor populations of boreal species) should obtain this book, it will be of limited value to most North

American ornithologists, including those running MAPS and other nonmigration bird-monitoring stations.—PETER PYLE, *Point Reyes Bird Observatory and Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, California 94956, USA. E-mail: ppyle@prbo.org*
