

BOOKS

Gatter W. – *Vogelzug und Vogelbestände in Mitteleuropa. 30 Jahre Beobachtung des Tagzugs am Randecker Maar*. [Bird migration and bird status in the Central Europe. 30-years of observation of diurnal bird passage at Randecker Maar.] 2000. AULA-Verlag. 672 pp., 421 figures and tables, 16 colour plates. Hard cover, price 49.00 EUR.

At first glance, the two-segment title of this book is internally contradictory: very general “...in the Central Europe” and “...at Randecker Maar”; one-point observations on the bird migration – the phenomenon on an inter-continental scale. How can the author studying the bird migration in one very special place in southern Germany discuss so wide phenomenon? Some explanation is a piece of information from his biography – he studied bird migration in Western Africa as well (see his earlier book – *Birds of Liberia*). Even so, this does not explain all – I could express the opinion that the real basis for so wide treatment of very specialised data is an internal attribute of the author, which can be called “open-mindedness”. This feature enables him to reject schematic lines of thinking and to connect apparently very distant facts and ideas. So, the whole book is, according to the title, at the same time very general and very detailed, thus – extremely difficult to discuss and to review. This is the book that need to be studied, not read only, and after every chapter a lot of thoughts are whirling in mind.

The book is written in German, but the author and the editors have thought also about others (as majority of ornithologists all over Europe and the World use English) and all chapters have summaries not only in German but also in English. All figures and tables have English headings as well. Every non-German-speaking reader can appreciate this, nevertheless still dreams of full English text.

Listing of the contents, at least by presenting titles of the chapters, seems to be necessary to have the idea about the book. (1) *The Randecker Maar Observatory – bird and insect migration* (migration of insects is observed there too); (2) *A typical day during migration at Randecker Maar*; (3) *Acknowledgements*; (4) *Definition of terms: forms and strategies in bird migration*; (5) *Measuring annual changes in bird population numbers by different survey methods and by standardised migration observations – methods and comparison*; (6) *Field characters of migrating passerines*; (7) *Broad- and narrow-front migration through Central Europe and at Randecker Maar*; (8) *Sight observations relating to migration altitude at Randecker Maar*; and *Sight observations relating to migration headings at Randecker Maar*; (9) *High pressure area over Central Europe – principles underlying weather events*; *Rain, wind and clouds – the influence of weather on bird migration: an overview*; *Bird migrations and large-scale weather systems*; *Calm-breeze-storm: effects of wind on bird migration*; *Grey sky or sunshine – bird migration and cloud cover*; *Bird migration and visibility*; *Hard weather mi-*

gration; The “autumn of extremes” of 1974 – a once-in-a-century weather catastrophe; and The “fine weather autumn” of 1997 – high altitude migration and few stopovers; (10) Diurnal migration and the Moon; (11) The annual migration pattern; Timing of medians and shifts over time; Passage duration and its determining factors; Concentration in a few days or evenly spread migration – two strategies; Length and exactness of migration duration in partial migrants; Additional causes of seasonal changes; Post-fledging and post-breeding dispersal, and retromigration; (12) Basic elements of diurnal movements; (13) Flight speeds close to the ground and measurements at Randecker Maar; Migration performance and its change over the season; Single species flock formation and solitary migration; and Mixed-species flocks or interspecific behaviour; (14) Eruptive species; (15) Origin of species diversity in Europe; Changes in habitat area and dynamics before and since 1970; Land-use changes and bird population densities; Pesticides; Eutrophication and emissions; Fire as a component of the dynamics of Central European ecosystems; Anthropogenic causes of loss and disturbance; Dynamics of natural forest in Central and northern Europe; Central European forests today; Forest seed crop and avian community dynamics; Boreal forests; Mediterranean woodlands; Climate, man, and birds; and Africa: changes in winter habitat of Palaearctic species; (16) Competition and predation relationships between birds and other groups of animals – a neglected subject?; (17) Population trends of migratory and resident birds at Randecker Maar (species by species descriptions); (18) Provisional evaluation of some factors involved in population changes during last decades; and at the end – a huge list of references.

From the beginning of the book to the chapter 14, the author discusses migration and its parameters basing on (or at least in close connection with) the migration observed at Randecker Maar. He has been faced there, as all the researchers performing long-term studies, with the problem of long-term dynamics of migrants. Chapters 15-16 prepare readers to discuss the population dynamics data that are presented species by species in chapter 17. They give a solid background to drawing general conclusions, which are, according to the author: *“In short, it is the socioeconomic developments initiating changes in the landscape and in human behaviour at almost breathtaking speed that should be seen as the most influential root causes of the rapid changes in our avifauna. Climatic factors, apart from the Sahel drought episode, are, for the time being, regarded as playing only a subsidiary role.”*

Personally, I can agree with the conclusion, but still we are, in our thinking, limited to Europe, with its quick socioeconomic development and to populations migrating along the western flyway, which is studied much better than the eastern one. One of the arguments can be the fact that the Sahel drought, so frequently cited in West-European papers as a disaster for European trans-saharan migrating passerines, has not influenced seriously populations migrating from Europe in SE direction. Furthermore, there are observations suggesting that there are population areal shifts (according to different population dynamics) connected probably with the direction of migration rather than environmental conditions on breeding grounds. These processes acting in Central and Eastern Europe and even in western Siberia have been poorly studied yet and their influence is underestimated.

Despite of above comments the book can be highly recommended to be studied carefully not only as a source of valuable data but, first of all, as a reference stimulating to thinking and encouraging to have eyes wider open. I hope also that a full English version will be published soon, to supply researchers all over the world with an example how valuable can be the data collected in a long-term study when evaluated by a broad-minded researcher.

Przemysław Busse

Bolshakov C.V., Shapoval A.P., Zelenova N.P. – *Ringling report*. 2001-2002. Avian Ecology and Behaviour, Suppl. 1-7: 130 pp., 102 pp., 106 pp., 126 pp., 160 pp. Paper cover, price 15.00 USD per volume. E-mail contact: Nadejda Zelenowa – rybachy@bioryb.koenig.su

The *Ringling report* published by the Biological Station “Rybachy” and reviewed here is a very special one – it contains not only a general table listing numbers of recoveries obtained from ringed birds and numbers of birds ringed elsewhere and controlled at the station, but it contains also full ringing/recovery data. This means that published recoveries are accessible to all the researchers and they can be used in general evaluations without any limitations and permissions. This is a step back from the “modern” custom to store recoveries in computer files enclosed in the EURING Data Bank, which is used since the 1970s of the last century. Till the 1960s, most of ringing centres published full recovery data in yearly reports, so such data could have been accessed by any student. Since the creation of the EURING Data Bank, the recoveries have been stored there and not published. This apparent modernisation of handling recoveries, which was intended to simplify the access to them, has had quite opposite consequences – recoveries became difficult to obtain or even inaccessible at all. Any researcher interested in the evaluation of ringing data on European scale has to apply for a permission from each ringing centre and exactly list the problems he/she would like to solve. All these bureaucratic procedures last up to two-three years and some “ring owners” do not permit using their recoveries – the freedom of science has been broken and the development of evaluations – hold up. Thus, in this context, the publication of recoveries collected in Rybachy is a very big step **forward** to accessibility of ringing data for the research. Paper publishing has, however, some disadvantages – recoveries must be put into computer files to be effectively handled, while they already are in an electronic form. Therefore, the next step could be suggested: publishing full ringing recoveries data in a downloadable form at web sites. This is, however, the matter of future and we must be happy to have printed report in hand.

In total, during 1956-1997 (the period covered by the report), the Biological Station Rybachy ringed 2 064 613 birds belonging to 192 species. At the ringing site, 62 092 birds of 103 species were retrapped in the same year or controlled in subsequent years (these are not included in the report). As many as 7949 birds of 96 species were recovered outside of the ringing site (included into first four parts of the

report – *Supplements 1-4*) and 6084 birds were ringed outside of Rybachy Station and recovered there (these are published in subsequent three parts – *Supplements 5-7*).

A huge data file of the recoveries was divided into pieces making publishing and handling them easier: part 1 contains recoveries obtained from birds ringed in Rybachy: non-passerines and the first set of passerines – *Alaudidae*, *Hirundinidae*, *Motacillidae*, *Bombycillidae*, *Troglodytidae*, *Prunellidae*, *Turdidae*, *Sylviidae*, *Regulidae*, *Muscicapidae* and *Aegithalidae*; part 2 – *Paridae*, *Certhiidae*, *Remizidae*, *Oriolidae*, *Laniidae*, *Sturnidae*; part 3 – *Fringilla coelebs*, *F. montifringilla*; and part 4 – *Corvidae*, *Ploceidae*, other *Fringillidae*, *Emberizidae*. Starting with part 5, data on birds ringed elsewhere and recovered in Rybachy are given: part 5 – non-passerines and *Alaudidae*, *Hirundinidae*, *Motacillidae*, *Troglodytidae*, *Prunellidae*, *Turdidae*, *Sylviidae*, *Regulidae*, *Muscicapidae*, *Paradoxornithidae*, *Certhiidae*, *Remizidae*, *Laniidae*, *Corvidae*, *Sturnidae*, *Fringillidae* and *Emberizidae*; part 6 – *Aegithalidae*, *Paridae* (except for *Parus caeruleus* and *P. major*); part 7 – *Parus caeruleus*, *Parus major*. It must be stressed that above listed supplements contain **all** the recoveries from years 1956-1997, despite the fact that some of them were published earlier in *Atlas of bird migrations according to the banding data on the Courland Spit* by V. Payevsky in 1997.

The data after 1997 have been published in yearly reports of Rybachy Station in subsequent regular issues of *Avian Ecology and Behaviour* and this is really great idea accepted by independent ringing researchers community. All students working on bird migration, at least in Central and Eastern Europe should have these issues close at hand!

Przemysław Busse

Glutz von Blotzheim U.N. (Ed.), Bauer K.M., Bezzel E. – *Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas*. [Handbook of the Birds of Central Europe.] 2001. Vogelzug-Verlag / AULA-Verlag, Wiesbaden-Wiebelsheim. Electronic edition on CD: price 299 EUR.

The presented edition is an electronic copy of the well-known fundamental handbook of European birds issued in 15 volumes (including register volume), but in 23 pieces, in years 1968-1998 by AULA-Verlag. The CD contains additionally another publication issued as a separate book: **Wassmann R. – *Ornithologisches Taschenlexikon*. [Ornithological pocket lexicon.] AULA-Verlag. Price 17.00 EUR.** Now, this huge amount of information is available in a compact form, easy accessible in a library, at home or even, using a notebook, during the field excursions. The last pattern is still not in common practice, but surely will be more popular in the future – birdwatchers and ringers will be more and more interested in consulting bird guides or even handbooks during their fieldwork, at least at the field stations. From this point of view, adding the pocket lexicon to the handbook's CD is a very good idea – even non-professionals can effectively use the handbook which contains a lot of terms familiar to specialists, but less known to amateurs of field observations.

The review of the CD issue of such fundamental handbook is not an easy task. Detailed reviews of the text edited in 23 thick books in 1968-1998 were performed during these years in many journals. Therefore, only a few general comments will be made here. The first, natural impression after hearing about the CD is that the revised and updated version of the handbook is available. These hopes are not realised, as the CD version is the exact PDF-format reprint of the original hard-cover edition. However, a person who already bought the CD is encouraged to register as a legal user because a new edition is planned and the owner of this edition will have bonuses while ordering the new edition. In my opinion, this information should be more accessible and widespread, both from the marketing and scientific point of view. It is very important to know that the updated version of the book is being prepared in case the authors look for important data that has not been published yet, as well as it is important to suggest to them what could interest the readers. Some updates are obvious, as the development of knowledge for around three decades since the beginning of publication has become very well visible, especially in some fields of ornithology as, for example, bird migration and biometrics. Within the last area, much bigger than previous samples of measurements of living birds are available, and this applies not only to the ranges of values, which are far insufficient in the publication, but also to the averages and standard deviations, which are the basic information about variation between and within populations.

The another task of the review could be a discussion how to make the CD the most user-friendly. Generally, the navigating among parts of the book as well as the indexing *etc.* is easy, but in the future, a simplified volume numbering would be useful: *e.g.* now, the location of the Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) is: volume 11, part II, *Passeriformes* part 2, *Turdidae* I, which is much too far complicated than simple saying that the Robin is described in volume 14, as it would be possible if the traditional numbering was used. The numbering used in the CD is, obviously, derived from the original numbering of volumes in the hard-cover edition, but the idea is followed also in the screen use – having open the volume 11 part II we have an easy access only to the volume 11 part I (that is below on the left panel directory list!), while to other volumes we have to go through “*HBV Übersicht*”. General contents page is listed as the third from the bottom directory – not the top or the last, which would be intuitively natural. A little bit similar comment could be given to the leaflet – a guide how to use the CD: it is only in German, whereas most of scientists and even birdwatchers in Europe are English- rather than German-speaking and surely more familiar with English computer terms than with German ones – *e.g.* a key “*STRG*”, mentioned in the text, does not exist at any-language keyboard except for the German one. For most of the non-German-speaking readers, even those that know the language in a degree that allows to understand professional ornithological terms of the book text, this is an additional obstacle, which could be easily eliminated. These comments are, of course, of minor importance, nevertheless, more user-friendly navigation and explanations would be really appreciated by readers.

To sum up, the CD can be recommended to many ornithologists and to many amateurs of ornithology that have not so much money and not so strong shelves in their bookcases, which would allow to buy over 30 kilos of the hard-cover edition of this monumental book. And, even those who already have the paper edition will benefit from having the CD edition too – I am glad to have both of them.

Przemysław Busse

Walaś K. (Ed.) – *The Atlas of Wintering Birds in Małopolska*. 2000. Małopolska Ornithological Society. Kraków. 602 pp., 193 species maps and associated graphs, 178 colour photos. Hard cover, price 59.00 PLN.

This book is the second part of the work *The Birds of Małopolska* after the first part published in 1992 under the title *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Małopolska*. Despite the fact that, according to the title, *Atlas of Wintering Birds in Małopolska* deals with the wintering birds, it contains, as the background, basic information about breeding birds as well. This book covers basically years 1984-1993, however, for the rarest species the information is updated until 2000, so the time-span of the fieldwork is representative for the whole last decade of the XXth century. The field data are really large and as excellently presented they are unique not only on Polish scale (the only one such publication), but also in the world format – such evaluations of wintering time are scarce even in the countries that have a long tradition of atlasing the avifauna.

The first part of the book contains general information – description of the study area, including hydrography (rivers and reservoirs), forests, soils and agriculture, administrative divisions and density of population, climate (with the descriptions of winters when field data were collected), fieldwork methodology, the amount of material and methods of its processing, and general characteristics of wintering birds in the area. The explanations to the species accounts open the detailed description section, which is the main part of the book. For every species found in the area, its nomenclature is given (scientific name and common names in Polish, English, Slovak, Ukrainian and German), along with the species status, winter status, habitat, density data, population estimates, distribution map and atlas calculations. It must be stressed that all the information mentioned above is clear also to the non-Polish readers, as the text and all the captions are in two languages – Polish and English. The same applies to all other parts of the book. Beside the verbal accessibility of the information, the graphic part of it is presented excellently and it is really easy to understand what the maps contain. The appendices contain the physiographic division of Małopolska region, the list of observation sites with their exact location and the list of sample plots on which exact quantitative surveys were performed. Numerous references are listed as well. Indexes of scientific and Polish, Slovak, German and English names are given too. The final part contains 178 colour photos of Małopolska landscapes and birds wintering there.

The atlas is really worth of being put on the shelves of both public and private libraries. It encourages the amateurs of ornithology to collective work, which can be apparently boring, but well organised and summarised may give a lot of fun from being co-creators of impressive publication. It should be once more stressed here that the book is accessible not only for Poles and Poland neighbours but also to all who know English – the world-wide language of the science.

Przemysław Busse

Mitschke A., Baumung S. – Brutvogel-Atlas Hamburg. [Breeding Birds Atlas Hamburg.] 2001. Hamburger avifaunistische Beiträge 31. 344 pp., species maps and tables, 20 colour photos. Hard cover.

The work is published as the volume 31 of the journal *Hamburger avifaunistische Beiträge*, but its character is typical for a separate book as it is one of standard atlases of birds breeding in different regions or towns. The area covers 768 km², which was divided into 1 × 1 km squares and controlled during years 1997-2000 by more than 90 persons. The coverage of the area is presented at a map on the page 12 and it is shown there that different squares and even parts of the town were controlled in one year only, which means a little bit lower compatibility of the quantitative data from various parts of the area studied. However, the coverage was good and the general picture of breeding avifauna seems to be actual. The methodological problems of the study are discussed at the beginning of the paper. Next, the biotopes of the town are listed and their distribution presented on several maps and illustrated by a number of colour plates. The table presenting species list contains estimated numbers of breeding territories (according to which the species are arranged), densities per 100 ha, numbers of squares that were occupied by the species and changes in their distribution during last 30 years.

The main part of the atlas is, as usual, the species data presented using a distribution map and comments on distribution and status, habitats used and population dynamics, as well as the basic atlas data already given in the table mentioned above. For some more common species, the data are more detailed and comprise also the densities in different habitats. This brings interesting information but one can be surprised seeing values of one of parameters – median of density at sample plots – as 0.00 while still e.g. 163 territories were found (this parameter seems to be not logical here). At the maps of species distribution, the number of territories found at control squares is presented traditionally as black dots of differentiated size whereas late breeding sites as very small red squares. This is put on the background containing some habitat distribution data. At first glance the idea is good, but the more careful studying of the maps leads to the conclusion that the graphic presentation of data is rather weak side of the book. First of all, the smallest black dots may be difficult to find if dispersed and/or not numerous and red squares pointing late localisation are nearly invisible. Secondly, the habitat background maps are used in

a very unclear manner, if any logic can be found: e.g. in ducks – the Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) is presented at a map with the background depicting distribution of parks and forests (shown in dark grey), next the Teal (*A. crecca*) has the same parks and forests, but in violet-grey, next the Mallard (*A. platyrhynchos*) – again the same situation as for the Gadwall (dark grey), whereas Garganey (*A. querquedula*), Shoveler (*A. clypeata*) and Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) data have background with green areas shown in green but with parks and forests in different shades of grey, and afterwards the sibling species of the Pochard – the Ferruginous Duck (*A. nyroca*) has background once again with parks and forests in grey. To be even more confused, the next species – the Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) has the background with parks and forests in green...

However, these technical faults cannot change my general opinion that the book is the source of very good information useful in any analyses devoted to synanthropisation and urbanisation of birds. Hence, it should be recommended to all persons working in this area of ornithology.

Przemysław Busse

Tryjanowski P., Osiejuk T.S., Kupczyk M. (Eds). – *Bunting Studies in Europe*. 2001. Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe. Poznań. Paperback.

The issue is a selection of 17 papers devoted to the biology and migration of buntings and presented at the symposium held on 1-4 June 2000 in Poland. This meeting was the third one devoted to the buntings – a group of interesting bird species, but not studied enough. Some of the species – the Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) and the Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*) – are studied so well that even more complex ecological problems can be discussed, while some others are the object of studies rarely and the knowledge about them is very poor. A wide scope of problems was touched in the articles presented and those dealing with migration and population dynamics should be pointed here. As to articles about migration of buntings – i.e. *General characteristics of buntings migration in Eilat, Israel*; *Autumn migration of Ortolan Bunting in Poland*; and *Remarks on the bird condition on passage at the Courish Spit* – they show that we still do not know a lot about migration of buntings and further studies are urgent. Among other papers some claim population declines in Norway and Germany (Ortolan Bunting – *Emberiza hortulana*).

People interested in this group of species can find some interesting data here and they could be encouraged to more intensive studies on buntings.

Przemysław Busse