



# Ringling at Gedser Bird Observatory & Ringling Station

## Standardized monitoring protocol

Welcome to Gedser Bird Observatory & Ringling Station. This protocol outlines some important information regarding our standardized bird ringling program in order to ensure high quality data collection. This protocol should be used as a guideline for foreign ringlingers as well as for the local staff. We request that all ringlingers, who intend to carry out standardized bird ringling at Gedser, are familiar with the contents of this protocol and follow the instructions outlined below when ringling.

### **Before setting up the nets**

Always prepare the ringling equipment, eg. extra ring series, new sheets etc., the day before a ringling session.

You should always have a look at the weather forecast before setting up the nets! Keep an eye on the weather (precipitation) radar during ringling sessions and take appropriate action **before** weather conditions turn bad.

Link to radar: <http://www.dmi.dk/vejr/maalinge/radar-nedboer/>

### **Timing and fulfilling the standardized ringling program**

The last net to be set up in the morning, should be active for catching no later than 30 minutes before sunrise, preferably between 60 minutes and 30 minutes before. The standardized ringling session begins between 30 and 60 minutes before sun rise (the time at which all nets were set) and lasts for five hours. The minimum requirements for the standardized monitoring program is 300 mistnet meter hours, which can, for instance, be obtained by running 5 mist nets of 12 meters for 5 hours (5x12x5). You can use more nets if you wish, but only if you can keep up doing rounds every 30–60 minutes.

After 5 hours of standardized ringling, please make a note in the ringling data for each ring series that the standard time has ended. This is important for data registration.

Link to almanac: <http://www.torbenhermansen.dk/almanak/almanak.php>

If for some reason (rain, storm, illness etc.) you have to furl the nets before the scheduled end of standard ringling, the ringling still can, potentially, be registered as a standard ringling session. If you have the nets open 30 minutes before sun rise and for at least 4 hours after, the data is still registered as a standard ringling session. Also, if you are forced to furl the nets in the middle of a ringling session, standard ringling can be continued if the maximum time that the nets are closed does not exceed one hour.

If the weather conditions are unsuitable for ringling early in the morning and you have to postpone opening the nets, you can still complete a standard ringling session if the nets are up no later than 2 hours after normal setup time and are open for at least 5 hours. Please write the reason for ending standard ringling prematurely in the notes field when entering the ringling data in Zuschlag's Bird Ringling Database.



### **Net rounds**

The time interval between net rounds should be between 30 and 60 minutes, with 30 minutes being the normal interval and 60 minutes being the rare exception! The order in which the nets should be set up and checked is stated below:

H1 -> H2 -> H4 -> F1 -> H5 -> F3 -> F4 -> N1 -> N2 -> N3 -> N4 -> N5 -> N6 -> N7 -> N8 -> Ø1 -> N9 -> Ø2 -> Ø3 -> Ø4 -> Ø6 -> P2 -> D1 -> Ø7 -> Ø8 -> Ø9 -> Ø11

(A diagram of the net positions and net lengths is available in the lab ringing manual.)

The following nets are not part of the standardized ringing program:

E01 (field nets in front of the station), P2 with sparrowhawk nets from 1st September – 15 November.

D1 and P2 are included with the standardized nets when passerine nets are used before the 1st September. After this date the passerine nets should be replaced with sparrowhawk nets and are no longer included in the standardized design.

### **Ringing the birds**

The birds can be either bagged and ringed in the lab or ringed directly by the nets. We recommend that all birds are taken back to the lab for further investigation and measurements, however if this is not an option due to the number of birds caught, you can ring directly by the nets using a fully equipped ringing waistcoat!

You are advised to use our recommended list of ring sizes, which can be found in the lab ringing manual. We ask you not to deviate from the list of recommended ring sizes. However, in rare cases, there may be good reasons to deviate from the recommended list of ring sizes. If you decide to use another ring size than what is recommended, please make a note in the note field in Zuschlag's Bird Ringing Database for the specific ringing record.

Ringing in the lab: Please keep track of which birds belong to which round or hour by hanging the bird bags on different hooks and assigning an appropriate label, i.e. "hour 6" for birds collected between 6am and 7am. The hour interval to be written in the notebook is the hour interval in which the bird was extracted from the mistnet.

Ringing by the nets: The hour interval to be written in the notebook, is the hour interval in which the bird was ringed/extracted.

### **Data registration, methods and biometrics**

Sheets designed specifically for the standardized ringing program should be used for ringing as well as for recapture data. A copy of the sheet is shown in the lab ringing manual. Please keep one sheet for each ring size, however, all recaptures go in the same sheet.

If you decide to ring by the nets, please be sure that the notebook you are using has a number on the front. If it doesn't, please label it with the correct code (labels are found in the lab ringing manual).



Standard biometrics include: 1) Wing length 2) Fat score 3) Weight.

The standard wing length measurement is the maximum cord according to "Identification Guide to European Passerines" (page 19-21) by Lars Svensson. Information about fat score is found in the lab at the ringing table.

Special projects: We measure the wing formula of Sparrowhawks according to the method listed in the lab ringing manual.

### **Data entry**

All ringing data (new ringing records and controls) is to be entered by the ringer in Zuschlag's Bird Ringing Database daily and totals entered into Dofbasen.dk. We will introduce you to these programs, when you arrive.

Even if no birds have been ringed during a standardized session (simply because there were no birds around), you should register the basic weather data, net time, net meters etc. in the ringing database.

If standardized bird ringing is not achievable, the basic weather data, net time, net meters etc. should also be entered in the ringing database. In that case you put a "0" in the "total net meters" field.

### **Blogging**

We kindly ask that you post daily news on our blogspot, which is an integrated part of our website. Feel free to personalize your blogs. It would also be very much appreciated if the text is supported by one or more pictures. Our blog is visited by more than 100 people each day during the ringing seasons and the blogspot is an important window to the outside world, i.e. the public, various organisations and more.

### **Park ranger duties**

When working as a ringer you are requested to help with essential gardening, which includes lawn mowing, regular pruning of bushes and trees, etc. Make sure to mow the grass under the nets regularly, so that the birds do not get wet and cold when dangling from the lower net shelf.

### **Using the sound system**

The night before (from 2 am) and during standard ringing it is not permitted to manipulate passerine migration by using the sound system. The only exception to this rule is the tape lure of Tengmalm's Owl during October and November. However, when using the sound system you should always be aware that you are not causing any serious disturbance to birds, neighbours or public visitors. You should always consider animal ethics before turning on the sound system.

### **General advice**

The garden is a public area allowing people to walk through the garden, have lunch and more, but people are not allowed to walk in-between the nets. If this happens, please guide them to the main path or the front yard.

Remember that the birds come first. This means that you should never open more nets than you can handle on your own! We want the bird ringing at Gedser to be carried out by responsible people who care more about the birds and the quality of the data than numbers or rare birds!



It is important that you are ready when the day starts. Have breakfast before you do the first round or set up the nets. You might suddenly find yourself busy with constant bird ringing for the next 5 hours or even more.

Remember, that you are not allowed to sleep while the nets are open. When catching nightjars and owls you should preferably do so with another person and take turns checking the nets. If you intend to carry out ringing during the hours of darkness on your own, you are not allowed to sleep between net rounds, because of the possibility of not waking up!

It is highly recommended that you always carry your cell phone with you. – You might want to call for assistance or inform other people about the spectacular bird you just extracted from a mist net. A telephone list is available in the lab ringing manual!

Remember that only the ringer decides if a bird is going to be shown to the public (this includes local people, birders and photographers). If there are too many birds in the nets or the bird has no fat or seems weak – then the bird should be released – take photos and let it go. Animal ethics always come first.