



Work procedures for Haparanda Sandskär Bird Observatory

All staff members should carefully read these Work Procedures, Program for Haparanda Sandskär Bird Observatory, Rules for the national park, and Message T 159 from the Ringing Center about Bird diseases and the follow them. The Site manager (Platschef), Ringer-in-charge (Ansvarig märkare), and Assistants (Assistenten) shall, before starting the work, sign an affirmation that he or she has read, understood, and accepted to conduct the work according to these documents. The Ringer-in-charge must also be acquainted with the contents in "Handbok för ringmärkare" (Handbook for ringers). All this information is found either in the Station Binder (Stationspärm) or in Station Binder 2 (Stationspärm 2). The responsibility for making sure that all staff members have fulfilled this rests with the Site manager. A list of Site managers, Ringers-in-charge, and Assistants can be found in the Station binder. The Site manger is responsible for making sure that the Trainees (Praktikanter) follow the rules.

Of highest importance is to carry out the work in such a way that the safety of all birds is not put at stake.

Tasks to be carried out every day

1. Standardized ringing. Instructions below.
2. Demonstration of ringing to visitors that may show up at the ringing site. Instructions below.
3. Meeting with all staff to, among other things, summarize observations during the day.
4. Entering the ringings, re-traps and net hours into the computer program Fagel-2 and proof reading.
5. Uploading the observations to "Svalan" including number of birds ringed.
6. Filling out the forms in the Field binder and on the Station Computer/Station Binder List and instructions below.
7. If a rarity has been observed, a rarity report shall be written the same day.
8. Observing and recording the weather once per day.
9. Checking the order around the ringing site and around and inside the cabin. Both are to be kept tidy!

Instructions for standardized ringing

Ringning

In order to be able to draw conclusions of our ringing it is important to keep as many factors as possible the same from year to year. For this reason certain routines are standardized..

All ringing is, from year 2003, located at Sydön. The locations of the nets are standardized and are marked 1-10 on a map in the Field binder. The standardized ringing comprizes 24 nets. If all nets can not be used, for example because of high winds or high water level, or if

there is a low number of birds, alternative net sites may be used. The alternative net sites are also standardized and are marked A1-A4 on the map in the Field binder.

Wader cages may be put at suitable places along the shores of the peninsula where the standardized nets are located and on Pauhu. Be attentive of water level changes and move the cages to higher ground if needed! The water level can rise more than one meter in a few hours.

During the spring period and the fall period until September 15 the nets are to be opened at 05.00 and closed at 11.00. After that the times are 06.00 to 12.00. It is however necessary that it is light enough to pick the birds from the nets safely, so certain days the start must be delayed. The ringer-in-charge decides when it is light enough.

Standardized ringing with wader cages is conducted during July and August 05.00-11.00.

For standardized ringing with nets we use the site code SYDÖ and for standardized ringing with cages the site code BUR. For all ringing on Sydön outside standard hours and for all ringing with alternative nets we use the site codes SYDS and BURS.

All nets are to be closed during rain. During strong winds all nets where the safety of the birds is at stake are to be closed.

When there is strong wind or when the station is left unmanned for a few days the nets must be tied with at least 4 strings per net. If the weather does not allow ringing, the nets must anyway be checked at least once per day, more often in severe conditions.

Ringing pliers must be used. The risk of overlap is increased considerably if you just use your fingers. We have had retraps of birds with injuries caused by overlapping. There are also pliers for the ring size 0,5.

Use the recommended ring size if the leg of the bird is normal. Note that there have been some changes of recommended ring sizes!

The nets are to be checked at least every 30 minutes. Wader cages are checked once per hour.

It is forbidden to pull feather samples for DNA analysis. The Ringing Centre does not allow taking feather samples for species determination, even if it is a rarity.

Collecting feathers that have been dropped is allowed.

The nets are to be erected in a stable way and with the lowest shelf high enough so that birds will not lay on the ground. This is particularly important in places where there are ants. The end net poles must always have two V-mounted guys well anchored to the ground with pegs or heavy stones. Three shelves are to be put above the point where the guys are fastened. The mounting of the nets is to be checked daily. When closing the nets a furling stick is to be used to pull the top down since this gives less wear of the nets. Do not pull the side strings. Damages to the nets should, if possible, be mended.

The net rides are to be maintained continuously. The ground is to be raked and interfering twigs and shoots removed.

The number of open nets must be adjusted to the number of staff members and the level of experience. The smallest number of staff members for a full number of nets is normally 1 ringer and 2 assistants.

Biometry to be carried out is wing length, weight and fat score. If there is competence we also do postjuvenile mold. If the number of birds is big, the first thing to drop is biometry of common species. In that case biometry is only taken on every ten birds of these. If this is not sufficient nests are closed. This prioritization has been agreed with the Ringing Centre.

Ringing outside standardized times and places is only allowed if it does not interfere with the standardized ringing and the work in connection with this. For ringing outside standardized hours the site codes SYDS and BURS are used. The site code SYDS is also used for birds caught in the alternative nets.

The staff is encouraged to carry out their own studies and projects, but everyone must be aware of the special responsibility involved in carrying out ringing in a national park. We must understand that what we do can be misunderstood by other visitors on Sandskär and it is important that we do not give the impression of being ruthless towards the birds or the vegetation.

There are additional rings in a box under one of the beds. There are also extra nets. Additional forms are in a document box in the book shelf marked "Blanketter och Ifyllda protokoll"

The rings are to be used in the correct order. A list of available rings is found in the Station Binder.

Be careful with the equipment. Each net costs 400 SEK and a bird bag SEK 50.

Futher training of all staff members is important. As much as possible, without jeopardizing the safety of the birds, those with less experience should be given the opportunity to practice all aspects or ringing.

Retraps

All retraps are to be noted in the form "Kontroller" if the time between banding and catching is more than 12 hours. Note also wing length, weight and fat score (and if possible post juvenile moult) at the time of retrapping.

Dead birds

Birds that have died in connection with ringing are to be reported in a special form. The birds should, if possible, be collected, packed in a plastic bag of and put in the freezer for later sending to the Museum of Natural History. A piece of paper with the date of death should also be put in the plastic bag. Collected birds must also be noted in the form "Tillvaratagna fåglar".

"Statens vilt" (State game)

Animals of a number of species belong to the state. If a dead specimen of such an animal or part thereof is found it must be collected. The police is to be notified the same day, phone number 114 14, and is responsible for sending the animal to the Museum of Natural history. The animal is to be taken to the police by NOF (Norrbotten Ornithological Society) or the Warden. Animals potentially relevant for Haprandas Sandskär are: Osprey, Honey Buzzard, Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, Great Grey Owl, Smew, Crane, Greyheaded Woodpecker,

Whitebacked Woodpecker, Hoopoe, Golden Oreole, Lesser Whitefronted Goose, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Storks, Eagles, Kites, Falcons, and Harriers.

Moulted feathers

The staff of the bird observatory are recommended to leave moulted feathers in the place where they are found.

Visitors

Information to visitors about birds and ringing is an important activity of the observatory. If there are many birds in the nets the information can be very short, but still try to give it 5 minutes.

Forms to be filled out daily.

1. Weather observations (Computer or station binder)
2. Ringing protocols (Field binder)
3. Retraps (Field binder)
4. Net hours, (Field binder)
5. Cage hours (Field binder)
6. Dead birds, if any (Field binder)
7. Collected birds, if any (Station binder)
8. Ringing (Computer or Station binder)
9. Species observed (Svalan or Computer or Station binder)
10. Observations according to the report scheme (Svalan or Computer or Station binder)
11. Rarity reports if applicable
12. Daily log sheet (Station Binder)

Advice for forms

Please note that the details of these instructions may be changed when we have established how well the new solar panels and the wireless Internet connection work.

1. Weather observations

Weather observations are to be carried out daily before the ringing according to a special instruction.

2. Ringing protocols (Field binder)

To be filled in according to instructions by the Ringing Centre using the species given in the Field Binder. The observatory has its own forms adapted for use with Fagel-2. For the first entry of the day on a given form all boxes are to be filled in, also month and species. Completed forms may be moved to the document box marked "Blanketter och ifyllda protokoll" in the book shelf, but they may also be kept in the Field binder if they do not get too worn.

3. Retraps (Field binder)

Ring number, species, and biometry is filled in. Be very careful to read both the serial number, number and ringing centre. Rings of all retraps are to be read twice to avoid errors.

4. Net hours (Field binder)

Basis for net hours in Fagel 2. If nets are closed and opened during a ringing session you enter a new line each time there is a change.

5. Cage hours (Field binder)

Is entered in the same way as net hours

6. Dead birds (Field binder)

Bird killed as a result of the ringing or netting. Are to be reported. See above

7. Collected birds (Station binder)

Here all birds placed in the freezer compartment are to be noted.

8. Ringing numbers (Compter and Station binder)

The number of ringed birds in the standardized ringing is entered into to excel file Märksum and is also noted in the station binder. The sums are obtained from Fagel-2.

9. Species observed (Computer or Station binder)

Estimate the number of each species seen on the island during the day. Also include species seen by other visitors if these seem correct. Birds ringed are NOT to be included since these are reported separately.

It is preferred to use the computer file Svalan_excelinmatning_HSFS. A new excel file is made for each day and is saved as Svalan_excelinmatning_YYMMDD. This file is then uploaded into Svalan. Be particularly careful with species in the report schemes. Such species are coded with a grey-scale in the form. You may need to make extra lines in the excel file, for example to record a female in one line and a brood of chicks in the next.

If the computer does not work, use the corresponding form in the station binder.

10. Observations of species according to the report scheme

If the observation had been reported in Svalan or entered into the file Svalan_excelinmating this point can be skipped. If the form Observations has been used additional information is needed for species in the report scheme and for species for which breeding criteria are observed. These will then form the basis for entry into the Svalan report system.

11. Rarity report

If possible the rarity report should be entered directly into Svalan. If this is not possible you use the form that is available on the computer, in the field binder and in the station binder.

12. Daily log sheet (Station binder)

Tasks to be carried out once per week

1. Backup the computer files that have been changed during the week to a diskette.
2. Wipe the floors of the ringing hut and the cabin with soap and water. (To be done every Friday).
3. Wash bird bags. Can be done by the shore. If there is sufficient water it can be done by the ringing hut. (May be needed more often)
4. Check the number of bird bags each time someone is about to leave.