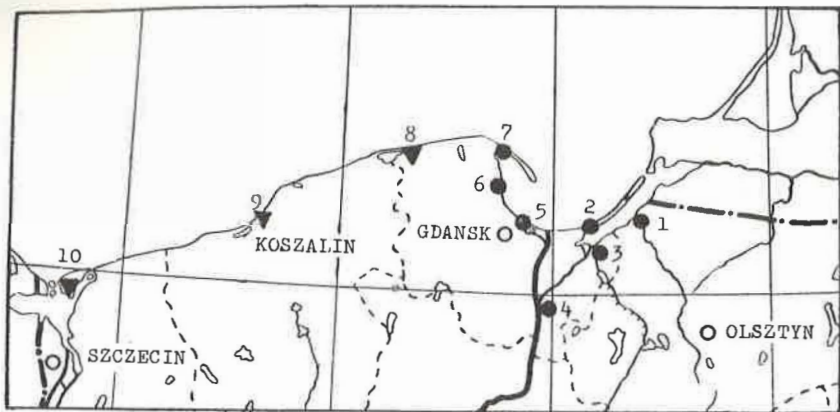


OPERATION BALTIC 1962
(Reprinted from The Ring, III(35):195)

In the autumn of 1962 ten trapping and ringing stations were in operation along the Polish coast of the Baltic Sea. The staff of each station consisted of a young but experienced ornithologist serving as a leader and two or three undergraduates of various Polish universities. The eastern stations (circles on the map) were manned from September 1st to September 31st, the western ones (triangles) from September 11th to October 10th. One station situated centrally (?) operated for two months up to the end of October.



The time-table and the work at all the stations were strictly uniform, the methods being agreed upon beforehand. Each leader had to follow the instructions exactly in order to obtain the comparable results. During the whole period the work was carried out from 6 a.m. until dusk, all the nets being controlled at one hour intervals. At each station the leaders spent 15 minutes per hour observing visible migration and making notes on bird passing their observation points.

Fifteen to twenty-five steelon mist-nets of Polish make were used at each station. Trapped birds were weighed, measured, examined for fat deposit, moult, and ectoparasites. In certain species the wing formula was noted. Dead birds were skinned and skins were deposited with the Zoological Institute in Warsaw. Among them there is one specimen of Pallas' Warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*) trapped at Station No. 7 which is the 18th specimen in Europe.

Generally speaking, the results of the 1962 operations were rather disappointing owing to the unusually late and weak autumn migration. 25,113 birds of 109 species were ringed in all, 6741 of them were retrapped locally at the ringing stations. The list of species is headed by *Erithacus rubecula* (Robin Redbreast) 11,771, *Regulus regulus* (Goldcrest--like our Golden-crowned Kinglet) 2039, *Turdus philomelos* 1146.

Among the more interesting or rarer species there were: one *Phylloscopus proregulus* (Pallas's Warbler), four *Phylloscopus inornatus* (Yellow-browed Warbler--Sylviidae), two *Loxia leucoptera* (White-winged Crossbill), some *Muscicapa albicollis* (Collared Flycatcher), *Muscicapa parva* (Red-breasted Flycatcher), *Asio otus* (Long-eared Owl), *Aegolius funereus* (Tengmalm's Owl), etc.

The following direct-recoveries were obtained in 1962:

Erithacus rubecula Varsovia H 77303
(Robin Redbreast)

- * 24. 9.62 Bukowo (No.9 on the map)
v 26. 9.62 Miedzyzdroje (No.10). Distance 135 kms/2 days.

Parus caeruleus Varsovia H 74121
(Blue Tit)

- * 4. 9.62 Hel (No.7)
v 1.10.62 Bukowo (No.9). Distance 150 kms/26 days.

Parus caeruleus Varsovia H 70251

- * 14. 9.62 Zelistrzewo (No.6)
v 4.10.62 Leba (No.8). Distance 70 kms/20 days.

The only one previous direct-recovery obtained in 1961 operations was as follows:

Erithacus rubecula Varsovia H 28701

- * 5. 9.61 Nowa Pasleka (No.1)
v 17. 9.61 Bukowo (No.9). Distance 230 kms/12 days.

Nine of the trapped birds bore the foreign rings viz. two *Parus major* (Moskwa), *Parus ater* (Moskwa), *Regulus regulus* (Stockholm), *Muscicapa hypoleuca* (Helsinki), *Erithacus rubecula* (Helsinki), *Carduelis spinus* (Praha), *Calidris alpina* (Stockholm), *Larus ridibundus* (Moskwa). At the time of writing, the ringing data of these birds are not yet available.

Operation Baltic has now its three year tradition. In autumn 1960 we started with one trapping station (No.5) where we became acquainted with mist-netting and experimented with observations. The first season resulted in 1294 birds ringed, and stimulated new, more ambitious plans. Next year, our mother organization The Biological Club of the Warsaw University Students organized a large scale programme along the Polish coast of the Baltic Sea. Six netting stations (Nos. 1,2,5,7,9,10) with 41 mist-nets were manned for a month by 19 members of the club and undergraduates of other universities. 10,534 birds were ringed, one direct-recovery was obtained, three birds with foreign rings were netted.

Birds ringed in 1960 and 1961 (total 11,828) yielded to date 65 foreign recoveries with *Erithacus rubecula* (21), *Parus major* (11), *Turdus philomelos* (7), *Turdus merula* (6) heading the list.

In 1962 the operation was sponsored by the Laboratory of Ornithology of the Wroclaw University, which provided the camping equipment, defrayed the costs of transportation, and provided other facilities.

For the next season some organizational and technical improvements are foreseen. We intend to use a portable Helligoland trap at one of the stations, to extend the netting period for a longer time, to reduce the number of stations to seven, and to use more mist-nets at each station.

Operation Baltic evoked interest in other countries situated along the Baltic coasts, in the Soviet Union (with the Latvian and Estonian Republics) in the east, and in the German Democratic Republic in the west. If sufficient stock of mist-nets could be secured and if the working methods and the time of operations could be agreed upon, the Operation Baltic should become an excellent opportunity for an international cooperative project for the study of bird migration along the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea.

P. BUSSE, Wroclaw & M. GROMADZKI, Warsaw

(English common names inserted in above by EBBA Editor)



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