

Preface

Even though the importance of migratory stopovers and the related events for bird migration as a whole has been intuitively clear since long ago, the targeted study of this field did not start until a relatively recent time. Since the late 1980s—early 1990s, stopover ecology and behaviour have attracted the attention of a number of students of bird migration. An important point was the dissertation of Åke Lindström ‘Stopover ecology of migrating birds’ presented at Lund University (Lindström 1990). At the same time Thomas Alerstam and Åke Lindström published their seminal paper that laid the foundation of the optimal bird migration theory (Alerstam and Lindström 1990). Equally important were the studies of Frank R. Moore and his colleagues at the University of Southern Mississippi (Moore and Kerlinger 1987; Loria and Moore 1990; Moore and Wang 1991) and the dissertation of Andreas Kaiser which was based on work done at what is now Max Planck Institute for Ornithology (Vogelwarte Radolfzell) and presented at Konstanz University (Kaiser 1993).

Even though the study of stopover ecology and behaviour of migrating birds actively developed and for some time was a ‘hot topic’ in bird migration research, rather surprisingly, no monographic review on stopover biology of birds has been produced. This book is an attempt to fill this gap.

My own research of stopover ecology and behaviour started when I, as an undergraduate student, was doing my diploma project on migration ecology of *Acrocephalus* warblers at the Biological Station Rybachy of the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences under the supervision of Casimir V. Bolshakov. Since 1994, I have worked at Rybachy doing research of stopover biology of songbirds, mainly long-distance Palaearctic-African migrants. Most of my fieldwork was done on the Courish Spit in Kaliningrad Region of Russia, which has a long tradition of avian migration research going back to the early 20th century when it was in the German province of East Prussia. The study of bird migration was one of the main fields of activity of the world’s first bird observatory Vogelwarte Rossitten in 1901–1944 (Thienemann 1931; Vaughan 2009), and it has also been a very important working field of the Biological Station Rybachy which replaced it in 1956.

Some fieldwork was done at the Dzhabybek research station of the Institute of Forestry of the Russian Academy of Sciences (West Kazakhstan Region, Kazakhstan). I also analysed data collected at the International Birding and Research Center Eilat in Israel.

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