

PUBLICATIONS: BOOK REVIEW

Salmonid Field Protocols Handbook: Techniques for Assessing Status and Trends in Salmon and Trout Populations

Edited by David H. Johnson, Brianna M. Shrier, Jennifer S. O'Neal, John A. Knutzen, Xanthippe Augerot, Thomas A. O'Neil, and Todd N. Pearsons. American Fisheries Society in association with State of the Salmon, Bethesda, Maryland. 2007. 478 pages. \$35.00 (\$24.50 to AFS members).

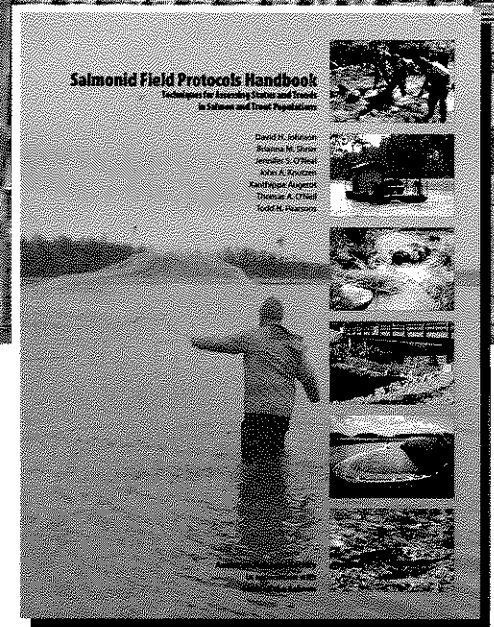
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The book *Salmonid Field Protocols Handbook* is an ambitious and overdue undertaking. While there are several good recent texts that rigorously address the theory and analysis of field data, this is a text that is squarely aimed at those who regularly don waders and get their hands wet studying salmon. To this end, the 7 editors and 37 contributing authors should be commended and fisheries biologists should take note.

While the title does not reflect it, the book is shamelessly aimed at the Pacific Northwest and Pacific salmon. This can be perceived as either a "pro" or "con" depending on the reader. On one hand, the text could have served a much wider audience than the stated geographic area. On the other hand, much of the text still does. There are 18 methods described that cover a considerable range of technological complexity (from cast netting to electrofishing) and cost (foot surveys to hydroacoustics). Some topics, such as "Fish counting at large hydroelectric projects" are clearly of limited regional utility. The chapters on rotary screw traps and seining were particularly well crafted and will serve all readers regardless of locality and target species. Most chapters are well written and effectively draw on primary literature from many species and sources. In cases where theoretical discussions are limited due to the scope of the book, authors provide substantial direction for further investigation.

Each chapter is presented in a consistent format with Background, Sampling Design, Field and Office Methods, Data Handling, Personnel Requirements, Operational Requirements, and Literature Cited. Overall this approach works well and allows one to "shop" for the best approaches in a comprehensive and evenhanded manner. There is, however, some inevitable awkwardness in fitting a diversity of methods to the same format. In one chapter, readers are informed "Equipment needs" include duct tape, WD-40, rags, and toilet paper for carcass surveys. The equipment list for hydroacoustics differs significantly!

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This is a book about field work. While approaches and chapter texts vary in detail, the information is the distillation of thousands upon thousands of hours of effort. I have no doubt that what may appear to be excessive thoroughness is born of experience and is worth passing on. Often I was struck with the thought "that's a good idea" or "I wouldn't have thought of that." The authors will clearly shave years off the learning curve for many heading into the field.

The methods chapters are preceded by four essays that explain the rationale and the development of the book. These short works underscore the regional need in the Pacific Northwest for consistency, cooperation, and a common template. In one essay, the frustration of post hoc analysis is pitted against the logic and logistics of assessing need and designing rigorous and appropriate sampling designs. In another, a very detailed prescription for standardization and data forms is given. There is a palpable undercurrent through these sections that the enormous investments of time, money, and intellect have fallen short of the Pacific region's collective potential. After all, that is the point of the book. The editors sum this up nicely in their dedication:

In the spirit of interdependence, we put forth the protocols in this book as we strive to create a common language of salmon knowledge for their survival and ours.

This is not a book one will sit down and read cover to cover. It is one that will serve as a reference for fisheries biologists well into the future to improve the design, implementation, analysis, and communication of findings from the field.

—Joseph Zydlewski
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