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Handbuch Naturschutzfachkraft: a guide to getting things done in conservation

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ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS AND AUTHORS

‘Handbuch Naturschutzfachkraft’ – or translated, the ‘Handbook of Nature Conservation Engineering’ – was written by an interdisciplinary team of authors consisting of experienced experts in science, administration, and practice. The aim of the editors Elisabeth Wiegele, Michael Jungmeier and Martin Schneider (Carinthia University of Applied Sciences) and its 54 authors is to create a practice-oriented reference that can be used both for training and everyday work. Contributors attach great importance to a holistic view of nature conservation and emphasize the importance of communication, cooperation, and legal background knowledge.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The book is divided into several main chapters: the basics of nature conservation, the legal framework, methodological expertise, communication and public relations, project management and practical case studies. Each of the ten chapters begins with an introduction and concludes with practical exercises or checklists.

The authors explain key terms and principles of nature conservation across the 662 pages of the book, including biodiversity, ecosystem services and sustainable development. One focus is on the current legal framework, in particular the Federal Nature Conservation Act of Germany and other relevant EU directives. Methods for mapping, assessment and monitoring are clearly explained, supplemented by numerous illustrations and tables.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The high practical relevance of the book’s topics is particularly noteworthy. Case studies and checklists facilitate implementation in everyday working life. The book demonstrates, for example, how using appropriate amphibian protection fences and temporary barriers at construction sites can help safeguard migrating toads and frogs from hazards during their main movement periods.

The work integrates scientific, legal, and communicative aspects and thus promotes a comprehensive understanding. The authors address current topics such as climate change, invasive species and digitalization. The topics have regional relevance, especially for the Alps-Adriatic region, as most case studies feature a Carinthian example. The clear structure, understandable language, and numerous illustrations make the book accessible even for less experienced conservationists.

This accessibility, while helpful to attract interest in the individual topics, may also be the book’s biggest weakness. Due to the simplified language, the depth of individual chapters sometimes falls short of expectations. Supplementary specialist literature is recommended for specialized questions. Furthermore, the book’s focus is strongly on Austria and Austrian law. International aspects are only dealt with marginally. Some content, particularly on legal principles, is repeated in various chapters.

Michael Jungmeier | Elisabeth Wiegele | Martin Schneider (Hrsg.)
**Handbuch
Naturschutzfachkraft**
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RELEVANCE FOR THE FIELD OF NATURE CONSERVATION

The ‘Handbuch Naturschutzfachkraft’ closes an important gap between theory and practice. It serves as a guide for career starters but also offers experienced professionals a valuable orientation aid for new challenges. The book is particularly relevant for training and further education, as it was compiled with these activities in mind. The chapters convey the requirements for modern nature conservation specialists in a practical and understandable way.

By emphasizing communication and project management, the handbook helps to strengthen the often-underestimated ‘soft’ skills in nature conservation. The practical examples promote the implementation of nature conservation measures on site and support cooperation with authorities, associations and the public.

CONCLUSION

The ‘Handbuch Naturschutzfachkraft’ is a highly recommended reference for anyone working in or interested in nature conservation. Despite minor weaknesses, its relevance is convincing due to its practicality, wealth of topics, and holistic approach. It makes an important contribution to the professionalization of the field and should not be missing from any specialist library.

ORIGINAL TITLE:

- [1] E. Wiegele, M. Jungmeier, M. Schneider (Eds.), Handbuch Naturschutzfachkraft, Praktischer Naturschutz für Baustellen, Betriebsgelände und Infrastrukturen, Fraunhofer IRB Verlag, ISBN 978-3-7388-0598-7, 2022

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