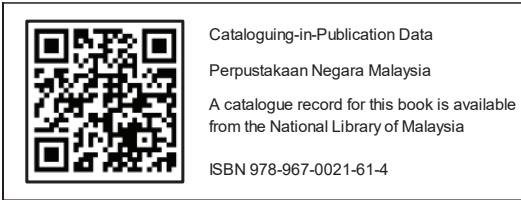


Handbook of: Basic Methods For Environmental Analysis

Editors
Nurul Syazana Abdul Halim
Nor Shahirul Umirah Idris
Wong Hie Ling

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TABLE OF CONTENT

List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	x
List of Contributors	xii
Preface	xv
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENT	1
<i>Nurul Syazana Abdul Halim</i>	
CHAPTER 2 WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS: PHYSICAL PARAMETER	11
<i>Noor Syuhadah Subki</i>	
CHAPTER 3 WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS: CHEMICAL PARAMETER	25
<i>Nik Raihan Nik Yusoff and Rozidaini Mohd Ghazi</i>	
CHAPTER 4 WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS: ENUMERATION OF BACTERIA	59
<i>Mohamad Faiz Mohd Amin and Shahrul Ismail</i>	
CHAPTER 5 WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS: MACROINVERTEBRATES IN WATER	67
<i>Sharifah Aisyah Syed Omar, Aweng A/L Eh Rak and Ahmad Abas Kutty</i>	
CHAPTER 6 HYDROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS- PRECIPITATION MEASUREMENT	81
<i>Norrini Rosaida Awang</i>	

CHAPTER 7 AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS: AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATION	91
<i>Marieanne Christie Leong</i>	
CHAPTER 8 SOIL ANALYSIS: PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES	101
<i>Muhammad Firdaus Abdul Karim and Wong Hie Ling</i>	
CHAPTER 9 NOISE MEASUREMENT	109
<i>Nor Shahirul Umirah Idris</i>	
CHAPTER 10 SPECTROSCOPY AND CHROMATOGRAPHY	115
<i>Rozidaini Mohd Ghazi and Nik Raihan Nik Yusoff</i>	
Index	129
Editors' Biographies	133

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	The connection between biotic and abiotic components	2
Figure 1.2	How to save the Earth	8
Figure 2.1	a) YSI 556 Multi Probe, b) features of 556 YSI Multiprobe System and c) features for 556 YSI Multiprobe [1]	12
Figure 2.2	Example of 556 YSI Multi Probe System Display [1]	13
Figure 2.3	a) Portable Turbidity Meter HACH 2100Q and b) features of Portable Turbidity Meter HACH 2100Q [2]	14
Figure 2.4	Turbidity measurement procedure	16
Figure 2.5	Total Suspended Solid Portable meter (Model: HACH-LXV322.99.00002) and its features [5]	17
Figure 3.1	Method for measuring the dissolved oxygen	26
Figure 3.2	Showing of 99.5% of DO on the screen of YSI 556 MPS multiparameter instrument	27
Figure 3.3	The YSI probe is ready to be submerged in the river	29
Figure 3.4	The example of BOD graph indicating the BOD ₅ and BOD ₂₁	33
Figure 3.5	Overestimation of BOD value due to the nitrification process	34
Figure 3.6	The collected water sampled in the BOD bottle	35
Figure 3.7	The aluminium wrapped BOD bottle (in red circle) place in the icebox before being topped with the ice cube and bring back to laboratory	35
Figure 3.8	The BOD nutrient buffer pillow	36

Figure 3.9	The three BOD bottle samples are ready to be incubated in the incubator for five days at 20 °C	37
Figure 3.10	The example of the initial and final DO reading using HACH HQ40D portable DO meter	37
Figure 3.11	The water sample is being transferred to the amber bottle for the manometric respirometric test method	41
Figure 3.12	The manometric respirometric test setup	42
Figure 3.13	Simple step involve in COD test	44
Figure 3.14	The COD concentration versus absorbance	45
Figure 3.15	The intensity of the transmitted light varies due to the intensity of the coloured solution	48
Figure 3.16	The flowchart for conducting ammoniacal nitrogen test	51
Figure 3.17	The distillation set	52
Figure 3.18	The residual oil after being placed in the oven	52
Figure 3.19	The collected water sample with had been acidified by concentrated nitric acid	54
Figure 4.1	Serial dilution	62
Figure 5.1	Collection of benthic macroinvertebrates	70
Figure 5.2	Sieved sample and preservation in 75% ethanol	70
Figure 5.3	Identification processes by using stereomicroscope	71
Figure 6.1	Symon rain gauge schematic diagram [3]	84
Figure 6.2	Tipping Bucket rain gauge schematic diagram [3]	85
Figure 6.3	Thiessen Polygon Method	87
Figure 6.4	Isohyetal to divide catchment area	89
Figure 7.1	Name of parts of the Automatic Weather Station	94
Figure 7.2	A screenshot that shows the pop-up window containing the data recorded by the data logger on the AWS	95

Figure 7.3	Time-series plot for temperature, dew point temperature and relative humidity for Day 1 and Day 2	97
Figure 7.4	Wind rose for showing the direction of the prevailing winds	97
Figure 8.1	Example of laboratory setup for soil texture determination using hydrometer method and the correct position of eye level when taking the meniscus reading	103
Figure 9.1	Sound Level Meter	110
Figure 9.2	Noise level from different sources	113
Figure 10.1	Example of Analysis of Cu ions in soil	117
Figure 10.2	FT-IR analysis for raw bamboo	123
Figure 10.3	Chromatogram of Standard Glyphosate at retention time 3.16 min	126

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Water Quality Index Parameters [6]	18
Table 2.2	National Water Quality Standards for Malaysia [6]	19
Table 2.3	Drinking Water Quality Standard [12]	21
Table 3.1	Chemical, physical and biological properties of water quality parameter	25
Table 3.2	The advantages and limitation of three sensor method for measuring dissolved oxygen concentration in water	28
Table 3.3	The differences of BOD and COD properties	32
Table 3.4	The example of the DO values recorded for the BOD calculation	38
Table 3.5	The estimation of the BOD values provided by the manufacturer	41
Table 3.6	COD concentration with respective absorbance value (example)	45
Table 3.7	The differences of ammonia and ammoniacal nitrogen [19]	49
Table 4.1	Agar plate count	63
Table 4.2	Most probable number	64
Table 4.3	MPN index and 95% confidence limits for various combinations of positive results when five tubes are used per dilution (10 mL, 1.0 mL and 0.1 mL)	64

Table 5.1	Description of sampler equipment	68
Table 5.2	Ecological and Biological indices description [4, 5, 6, 7, 8]	72
Table 6.1	Thiessen Polygon areal precipitation calculation	88
Table 6.2	Isohyetal area precipitation calculation	89
Table 9.1	Effect of noise levels on humans [2]	113
Table 10.1	Absorbance of methylene blue standard and sample	119
Table 10.2	Simplified Infrared Correlation Chart	120
Table 10.3	Functional group present in raw bamboo	124

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PREFACE

Environmental analysis is an integral part of environmental management to protect the environment and human health. Over time, equipment and techniques in the environmental analysis have evolved to account for various environmental issues including pollution. This Handbook aims to present fundamental analytical methods for tracking changes in different environmental compartments ranging from water, and air to soil using appropriate indicators.

On-site and off-site measurements during the respective field and laboratory experiments can be expensive due to the costs associated with equipment, labour, and time. However, the measured field data deem very important to reflect what happened under the actual conditions and for environmental monitoring purposes as part of regulatory procedures.

This Handbook consists of an overview of basic equipment and methods to investigate common environmental issues. What we hope, is that readers will find this Handbook a useful reference. We thank all authors for their extraordinary competence in sharing their knowledge in specific fields.

Nurul Syazana Abdul Halim

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENT

Nurul Syazana Abdul Halim

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENT?

In simple words, the environment is everything around us, which includes the biotic and abiotic components. The biotic component is referring to the living things (the human, flora, and fauna including fungi, bacteria, and viruses) that shape an ecosystem; whereas, the abiotic component is the non-living factors that are present in the ecosystem such as temperature, water, soil, light, wind, nutrients and etc. (Figure 1.1).

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BIOTIC AND ABIOTIC COMPONENTS

Both biotic and abiotic components are important and connected. For example, in an ecosystem, there are many types of plants, animals, and insects. Plants depend on the heat from the sun to produce food through the photosynthesis process. In the process of photosynthesis, they consume a large amount of carbon dioxide and supply oxygen, which is used by animals and humans to breathe. At the same time, they need water and good soil with a suitable pH and nutrients to grow. In this case, the plant is the biotic component that relies on many abiotic factors in order to survive. Meanwhile, herbivores like cows, goats, zebras, elephants, and others depend on the plant as their energy source and also as a source of oxygen. They also rely on other abiotic factors to live. This scenario is similar for other living organisms (carnivores, insects, humans), but each organism has different needs for abiotic factors.