

Dear Monitors,

You are reading the 4th EuMon Newsletter. EuMon has reached its final phase and is currently developing a coordinative framework for biodiversity monitoring in Europe. The most important news at this point is, however, that the EuMon database will be maintained and integrated in upcoming EU-projects. Hence, input is highly welcome further increasing the value of the database for future reporting duties of the EU member states.

From within EuMon

For now, the input has reached saturation. Despite that, the database is already a useful tool for integrating biodiversity monitoring across Europe, containing by now names and addresses of over 250 institutions across geographical Europe (see <http://eumon.ckff.si/wp23/?report=5#04>, Fig. 1).

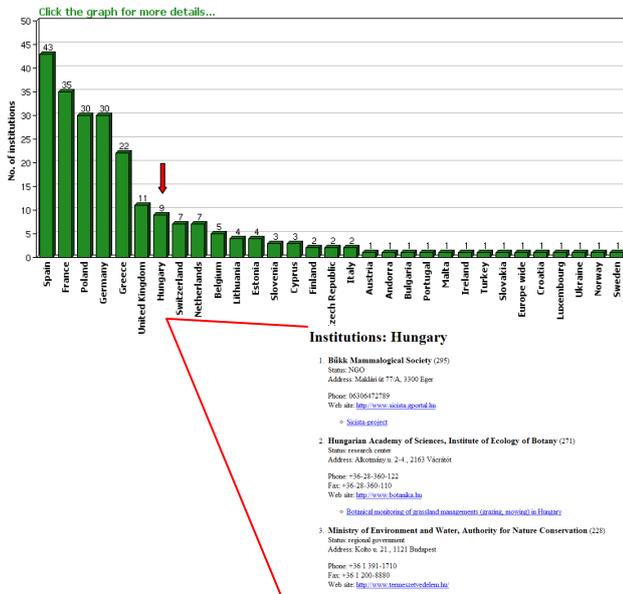


Figure 1: Graphic illustration of contact details in the EuMon-database. When clicking on the bars a list of addresses folds out also listing the monitoring schemes entered by that institution. The list is filtered by country and comprises also the latest entries.

The EuMon consortium also started to publish large parts of the results in scientific journals and will summarize most of the results in a special issue of the journal Biodiversity and Conservation. This issue will comprise all aspects of EuMon, starting from volunteer involvement and ranging over monitoring design to statistical analysis and national responsibilities.

The results of EuMon will also be presented in the final conference from the 28th to 30th of January 2008, which is currently organized. The title of the conference will be Monitoring Biodiversity in Europe – Volunteers, Efficiency and Costs. We attach a leaflet on the conference to a second email for further

information on registration, venue and program. The registration is free, and we would be happy to meet you in Leipzig in person (see also <http://www.eumon.ufz.de>).

Volunteers – the situation in Europe

There is a great deal of variation in the amount and types of volunteer monitoring and the organisations in which it takes place. The lines between paid members of staff and volunteers are not always firmly demarcated. Volunteers may or may not contribute to the operation and governance of their organisations and some even pay to take part in monitoring activities (Fig. 2).

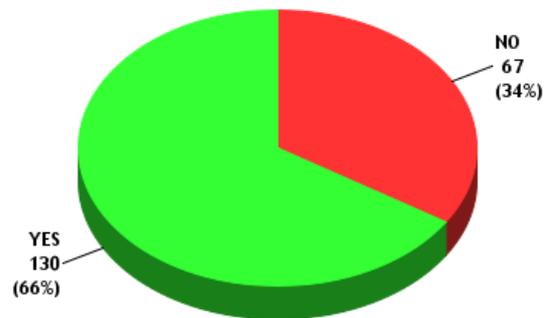


Figure 2: Do members of the public who have joined your organisation pay a membership fee? Of the 210 organisations providing information for this question, most (63%) required payment of a membership fee.

Recruitment and retention of volunteers

Strategies for both recruiting and retaining volunteers differ according to the types of Participatory Monitoring Network (PMN) in question. A general gauge for success is the extent to which the organisational culture and approach to volunteering matches the desires and aspirations of participants. The level of trust that obtains between volunteers within PMNs can be affected by the means of recruitment.

Webpages are important for recruitment in Participatory Environmental research Tourism and of major significance for Virtual Networks. The virtual network studied in this project, UK Phenology Network, also relied heavily on its association with TV broadcasting. National NGOs often seek publicity through stories about their work in print and broadcast media. In all types of organisations interpersonal relationships are vital to the retention of volunteers. Good social relations energise and stabilise volunteer activities. They also support the careful management of the volunteer/amateur/professional nexus which can otherwise prove problematic.

Balancing recruitment and retention is an ongoing dynamic for most PMNs. The degree of effort needed to bring in new volunteers while consolidating and motivating the existing body of participants requires lots of effort and inventiveness. Organisational issues

demand the same levels of attention and resources as those that are given over to the production, management and analysis of data.

Producing and analysing data

The skills and levels of commitment required from volunteers vary according to the types of PMNs in which they participate. Volunteering can range from that exemplified by the garden bird watchers of Britain to the fully trained licensed bird ringers who work for Akcja Carpatica, camping in cold and damp conditions amidst Poland's Beskidy Niski Mountains.

Volunteers are willing to take responsibilities beyond recording work, such as the DOF volunteers who act as managers of a team to monitor Denmark's specially designated Caretaker Sites and the NTBC members who collate, analyse and publish data. The responsibility and commitment volunteers bring to their monitoring activities means they care deeply about what happens to the data they produce and the uses to which it is put. All biological records collected by amateur volunteers are personalised to some degree, because they hold unique meanings for the person who on their own accord went out and collected them. PMNs need to inform volunteers about the fate of their data and consult them about decisions relating to its use.

Professionals, Amateurs and Volunteers

The management of relations between professionals and amateurs in monitoring networks in favour of amateurs is an important mechanism for achieving institutional stability and continuity. When processes of professionalisation are allowed to degrade the amateur status and make it appear an inferior version of professional practice problems arise. These circumstances lead to lack of opportunities for amateurs to build expertise through participation in monitoring projects, creating disillusionment among an organisation's membership, dissent between amateurs and professionals and eventual institutional decline.

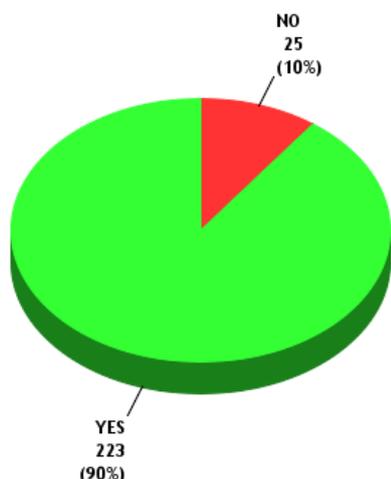


Figure 3: Do organisations give feedback to their volunteers? The majority of organisations (89%) stated that they gave feedback to their volunteers, the remainder stated they did not.

Read the full report on Europe's PMNs and the role of volunteers in biodiversity monitoring by sending a request to eumon@ufz.de.

Results from EuMon contribute to monitoring of Norway's biodiversity

As part of a national programme for the inventory and monitoring of Norway's biodiversity, special emphasis is placed on red-listed species and other species for which Norway may be considered to have special responsibility. This involves some considerable challenges, as both the number of red-listed species in the major taxa (fungi, insects) and their population sizes and distribution patterns make it difficult to apply standard representative sampling. A first approach to meet these challenges is to identify the relevant species and then to sort them into categories suitable for different monitoring approaches, based on their ecological traits and distribution characteristics. Here EuMon contributes in both steps. Results from EuMon's WP4 on national responsibilities will be very helpful in deciding relevant criteria for the selection of species for future monitoring, especially for species of national responsibility for Norway. The recommended EuMon approach may not be applied directly, but the basic logic behind this approach will aid in structuring the criteria for selection of a priority set of species. The various methodological considerations developed in EuMon's WP2 will then contribute to specify the basic approaches available for sound monitoring of species with different ecological and distribution characteristics. By the end of 2007, the work should result in a recommended set of species allocated to suitable basic monitoring approaches. Contact person for this work is Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson of NINA (anne.sverdrup-thygeson@nina.no).

Conferences and reports

3RD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Chemical Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens in collaboration with The Athens Institute for Education and Research (AT.IN.E.R.) organizes the 3rd International Symposium on Environment, 22-25 May 2008. For the program of the previous symposiums and other information please visit the conference website www.atiner.gr/docs/Environment.htm

HALTING THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY BY 2010: PROPOSAL FOR A FIRST SET OF INDICATORS TO MONITOR PROGRESS IN EUROPE

This report documents the achievements of the first phase (2005–2007) of the Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators (SEBI 2010) project on the development of indicators to monitor progress towards, and help achieve the European target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical_report_2007_11/en/Tech_report_11_2007_SEBI.pdf

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