

Volunteer Motivation

A brief assessment

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Motivations

- Cognitive
- Social
- Emotional

“I am doing something useful and interesting and also *appassionato*” Volunteer for Tethys Research Institute – working on cetaceans

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Knowing Nature



- Volunteers seek knowledge and skills
- Developing a better understanding of how nature works increases sense of intimacy and involvement with nature

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Mentoring



- Social learning is important to the survival and vitality of PMNs
- Less experienced members are apprentices to those with more experience - then go on to become mentors themselves
- Cycle of knowledge exchange

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Knowing nature protecting nature

- Informants wanted their data to be used for conservation
- But wary of being associated with radical strands of environmentalism
- Passion for nature is important for understanding volunteer motivation but is harnessed to desire to be taken seriously – identified as “being scientific”

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Volunteers want to know what happens to their data and the uses to which it is put



- By donating data produced through his/her personal time and resources a volunteer gives a portion of their self
- “What motivates them is to have their names on whatever they do and if we neglect that they will lose their motivation.” – Danish Ornithological Society employee.

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Alternative worlds

- “It is a very good pastime because it takes you away from your current world....and puts you in a different world” - Northumberland and Tyneside Bird club volunteer monitor
- Being part of a PMN means this “alternative world” can be shared and the social distinctions of the normative world are blurred
- “It doesn’t matter who you are ...nobody cares what background you are from ...You are there to birdwatch. That’s what you are there for.” - Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club volunteer

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“There is nowhere such fellowship as during Carpatica camp” – Akcja Carpatica volunteer



- Getting to know and trust other people is as important for volunteers as getting to know nature
- In a PMN where social trust between members was eroded the level of volunteering shrank accordingly

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Integrated motivations

