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Editorial

Conservation Biology celebrates success

Honors, award, and prizes are a long-standing tradition in science. In this spirit of celebration, *Conservation Biology* is presenting, for the first time, the Rising Star Award for the best student-led paper published in the journal in 2015 to recognize an outstanding student researcher and communicator. *Conservation Biology* is also recognizing papers published in the journal recently that have had a substantial academic impact and have received high levels of attention.

To award the Rising Star, we first identified student-led papers published in 2015 on the basis of positive responses to the submission question, “Is this work part of a PhD, Master’s or Honor’s thesis?” A group of *Conservation Biology*’s senior editors then evaluated the papers. The group of judges was balanced in terms of expertise, geographic origin, and gender in an attempt to minimize potential biases (Lincoln et al. 2012; Burgman 2015). Criteria used to judge the best paper, included importance, novelty, taxonomic and geographic breath, method innovation, relevance to practice and policy, collection of primary data, writing quality, and applicability to real-life conservation problems.

The winner of the inaugural Rising Star Award is Franziska Humair for her paper “E-Commerce Trade in Invasive Plants.” Her coauthors are Luc Humair, Fabian Kuhn, and Christoph Kueffer. The first place Rising Star receives a 1-year complimentary membership to the Society for Conservation Biology. The names of the second and third runners up, respectively, are Rebecca Spake (“A Meta-Analysis of Functional Group Responses to Forest Recovery outside of the Tropics”); coauthors:

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Thomas H. G. Ezard, Philip A. Martin, Adrian C. Newton, and C. Patrick Doncaster) and Stefano Canessa ("Planning for Ex Situ Conservation in the Face of Uncertainty"; coauthors: Sarah J. Converse, Matt West, Nick Clemann, Graeme Gillespie, Michael McFadden, Aimee J. Silla, Kirsten M. Parris, and Michael A. McCarthy).

Success is measured in many ways. Ultimately, successful conservation science protects and enhances biodiversity, positively affects society and improves policy. More immediately, success is linked to dissemination of high-quality, challenging, relevant, and important research. When such research is published, it is used and cited by other scientists and draws media and policy-maker attention.

Citations are widely held to reflect the importance of a person's work, but it is also well understood that they are not the only measure of the quality of a paper and that citation analysis has potential flaws (Werner 2015; MacRoberts & MacRoberts 1996; Van Noorden et al. 2014).

Altmetrics (alternative metrics) have emerged in response to the need for a complimentary measure that assesses broader research impacts by counting mentions of an article on social media and news-media sites and in reference-management tools, tracking real-time impacts of scientific outputs (Priem & Hemminger 2010). They measure the attention a publication is receiving beyond the scientific community (Parsons et al. 2014; Papworth et al. 2015). Like conventional citation statistics, altmetrics may not be an ideal measure of public interest in or the quality of a paper (Haustein 2016; Fenner 2014). Nevertheless, both citation counts and altmetrics assimilate collective intelligence (i.e., the wisdom of crowds) to identify important research (Haustein 2016) and we celebrate the authors of papers that score highly on these scales.

We determined the three most highly cited papers published in the journal in 2013 and the three papers with the highest Altmetric scores (www.altmetric.com) published in the journal in 2014. We used Thompson Reuters' Web of Science citation-index data to identify the most cited papers.

The most highly cited paper published in 2013 in the 2 calendar years following publication (i.e., 2014 and 2015) was “Six Common Mistakes in Conservation Priority Setting” by Edward T. Game, Peter Kareiva, and Hugh P. Possingham. This paper was cited 35 times in the 2 years following its publication. The average number of citations for all papers published in *Conservation Biology* 2 years after publication is approximately 8. The runners-up were “Achieving Conservation Science that Bridges the Knowledge–Action Boundary” by Carly N. Cook, Michael B. Mascia, Mark W. Schwartz, Hugh P. Possingham, and Richard A. Fuller (29 citations), “Current Near-to-Nature Forest Management Effects on Functional Trait Composition of Saproxyllic Beetles in Beech Forests” by Martin M. Gossner, Thibault Lachat, Jörg Brunet, Gunnar Isacson, Christophe Bouget, Hervé Brustel, Roland Brandl, Wolfgang W. Weisser, and Jörg Müller (29 citations), and “The ‘New’ Conservation” by Michael Soulé (29 citations).

The paper published in 2014 with the highest Altmetric score on 5 April 2016 (the date data were extracted) was “Key Role for Nuclear Energy in Global Biodiversity Conservation” by Barry W. Brook and Corey J. A. Bradshaw. This paper had an Altmetric score of 458, higher than the scores for all other papers published in *Conservation Biology* in that year and in the top 5% of all research outputs with Altmetric scores. The runners up for highest Altmetric score are “Estimating the Normal Background Rate of Species Extinction” by Jurriaan M. De Vos, Lucas N. Joppa, John L. Gittleman, Patrick R. Stephens, and Stuart L. Pimm (Altmetric score of 272) and “Legal Ivory Trade in a Corrupt World and Its Impact on African Elephant Populations” by Elizabeth L. Bennett (Altmetric score of 245).

The purpose of the Rising Star Award and our recognition of the articles with the most citations and highest Altmetric scores is to celebrate outstanding contributions to the advancement of conservation science and the success of these authors. Congratulations to those we have recognized and to all our authors for their excellent contributions to *Conservation Biology*.

Frith Jarrad, Managing Editor

Ellen Main, Senior Editor

Mark Burgman, Editor in Chief

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