

Annual Report 2015



British Ecological Society



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From the President

William Sutherland

I am delighted that the BES has had another highly successful year. The gamble of a conference in Lille paid off handsomely with a well-attended lively collaborative meeting; we are planning another such joint event in the future. Our range of journals are doing well, we have moved into Charles Darwin II, which provides excellent facilities and strengthens our role as providing a centre for UK biological societies, the membership is buoyant and we have an ever expanding number of Special Interest Groups, which increasingly play a key role in the society. The meeting in Edinburgh shows all signs of being a success with a flood of submissions for talks and posters.

We have completed our strategic review and are in the process of converting the ideas into practice to ensure scientific excellence whilst making ecology more relevant to society.



In my time as President I have become even more aware of the remarkable role of a vast community who ensure the success of the society. We would be nothing without the army who submit papers, referee papers, give talks, present posters, attend conferences, or the smaller group who edit journals, run conferences, help with grants, contribute to consultations, run Special Interest Groups, or the even smaller group of committee members and especially the committee chairs who oversee the process. Overseeing the entire process is the Charles Darwin House staff who run the whole operation with considerable professionalism under the eye of the deeply efficient Hazel Norman.

From the Executive Director

Hazel Norman



During the year your Society has delivered a successful range of services and events whilst also undertaking several important reviews of work streams that were highlighted in our five year strategic plan.

You will see from the Special Interest Group (SIG) section of this Report that the Groups continue to run an exciting and dynamic programme of events for ecologists across a wide spectrum of areas. I am always so impressed by the tireless work of the dedicated band of volunteers who run the SIGs and keep them a vibrant place for ecologists to come together. The Annual Meeting continues to go from strength to strength with a packed and exciting programme for Edinburgh in December. We've also been working hard to deliver another mainland Europe Annual Meeting after the success of Lille in 2014 so keep a close eye on our (soon to be revamped) website for more details.

There has been lots of work in our policy team looking at ways we can be more influential and help ecological science have a greater impact. We've been building our public engagement work and the appointment of our first dedicated member of staff in this area has really helped extend our reach, again supported by a very dedicated band of volunteers – who would have thought that the BES would have a presence at Glastonbury!

We have been continuing to support and develop our world class journals portfolio with several projects in the planning stages and some fascinating research done on the peer review process, initially using data from *Functional Ecology*. There is a huge team behind each title and they all work very hard to make our journals some of the best in the world.

The strategic plan highlighted the need for the BES to look at equality and diversity of those studying ecology so we have been working to gather data on the issue and BES Council will be considering a set of recommendations at the end of the year. I hope that will enable us to do even more to provide opportunities and support for everyone who shares our passion for ecology.

The BES inspires a large number of people who volunteer to help the BES be a thriving and successful organisation, and I would like to thank them all. I would also like to thank our dedicated and hard-working staff team without whom little would be possible. At the heart of the BES are our members who mean we can continue to foster, support and promote the ecological community and ecological science. I hope that you enjoy being part of such a great community and that you will encourage your colleagues to join us.

Highlights

JANUARY

Journal of Ecology published the Special Feature “Forest resilience, tipping points and global change processes” edited by Christopher Reyer, Anja Rammig, Niels Brouwers and Fanny Langerwisch.



FEBRUARY

Undergraduate Careers conference: 4 years in and this event remains as popular as ever.



An applications article on the TR8 package, a simple tool for retrieving plant functional traits from freely accessible online traitbases, was published in *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*.



MARCH

Demography Beyond the Population: the first of a hugely successful symposia. Organised by the international team of Alden Griffiths, Rob Salguero-Gomez, Cory Merow, Jessica Metcalf, Sean McMahon and Dylan Childs.

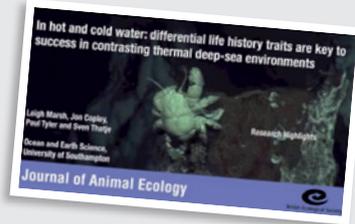


People, Politics and the Planet: Any Questions? A pre-election debate on the environmental policies of the UK's major political parties, chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby.



Highlights

Journal of Animal Ecology published a video to accompany a paper by Marsh *et al* titled: In hot and cold water: differential life-history traits are key to success in contrasting thermal deep-sea environments.



Functional Ecology published a new Perspective by Valiente-Banuet *et al.* entitled 'Beyond species loss: the extinction of ecological interactions in a changing world'.



APRIL

Alan Knapp interviewed Scott Ferrenberg about his Haldane prize-winning paper 'Smooth bark surfaces can defend trees against insect attack: resurrecting a 'slippery' hypothesis' for the *Functional Ecology* podcast.



Journal of Ecology honoured Deborah Goldberg in our Eminent Ecologist Virtual Issue series.

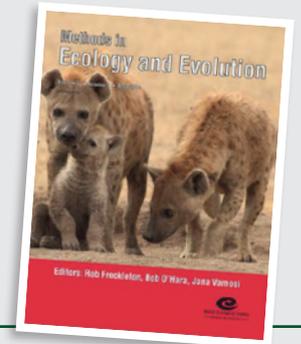


MAY

RHS Chelsea: celebrating the year of soils, we took our exhibition, Plants and Soils Working Together to RHS Chelsea.



Andrés Baselga wrote a blog post titled 'What is Beta Diversity?' for the *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* blog. The post has been viewed over 4,000 times.



Highlights

JUNE

Sex, Bugs and Rock 'n' Roll found a new music festival to try out this year and headed to Glastonbury!



Mark Brewer provided a blog post based on his talk at the *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* 5th Anniversary Symposium titled 'Ten Top Tips for Reviewing Statistics'. It has been viewed over 10,000 times.



JULY

Summer school: 48 highly talented and enthusiastic students met at Malham for a week of intense support in all things ecological.



Highlights

The Applied Ecologist's blog, from *Journal of Applied Ecology*, featured a post from a member of the Conservation Ecology SIG on harnessing the power of Google Earth.



The Ecology and Evolution of Emerging Plants and Pathogens: our second symposia, this time in sunny Cornwall. Organised by Dan Bebber, Sarah Gurr and Britt Koskella.



Functional Ecology published the Special Feature 'Ecology of Organisms in Urban Environments'.



AUGUST

Green Man: the last, but not least festival of the year for Sex, Bugs and Rock 'n' Roll!



A *Journal of Applied Ecology* article about enhancing gardens as pollinator habitats attracted press coverage in national news outlets and was the Editor's choice for Issue 5.

Highlights

SEPTEMBER

Enhancing Fieldwork Learning conference, charmed by camera trapping hedgehogs and inspired by @accessiblegeo who proved that disability doesn't hinder student access to fieldwork.



Journal of Animal Ecology published a virtual issue on social network edited by Ben Sheldon.



From Sept 2014 – Sept 2015 we awarded over £300,000 to support ecologists across our key grant schemes.



OCTOBER

Journal of Animal Ecology, *Journal of Applied Ecology* and *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* published a Virtual Issue on monitoring wildlife.

We welcomed three new Associate Editors (Susan Johnston, Natalie Cooper and Luísa Carvalheiro) to the *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* board.



Highlights

NOVEMBER

Journal of Ecology published a Special Feature on how plants affect biogeochemical cycling edited by Amy Austin and Amy Zanne.



DECEMBER

Our Annual Meeting! This year we will be in Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh – with 16 thematic topics, 24 general sessions, 16 workshops and a lot of fun! #BES2015



Bulletin

From Alan Crowden and Emma Sayer

The American politician Benjamin Franklin is credited with the suggestion that only two things in life are certain: death and taxes. If he had been an ecologist he might have added ‘..and Bulletin deadlines’. Four times a year our intrepid contributors receive a warning that it is time to rev up their computers and their wits, ready to keep the membership informed about Society activities. The net result since the last Annual Report has been four issues with a total of 296 pages comprising roughly 160,000 words and 360 photographs. 86 books have been reviewed, at least 10 meetings reported on, and Special Interest Group secretaries have been hounded mercilessly for reports on their manifold activities. We have celebrated the fifth birthday of *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* and marked the passing of six very fine and much-missed ecologists. BES staff have kept us informed about the important work the Society does on education, public engagement and policy, as well as the superb programme of meetings and events. We put the news of publications towards the back of each issue, but nobody should be in any doubt that it is the kudos



and revenue generated by our journals that underpins the reputation of our Society and puts us in a position to fund the activities that provide much of the material for our reporting in the Bulletin. The recent survey on open access and scholarly publishing, and the steady stream of new initiatives reported for individual journals, should remind readers that while the publishing swan is serenely progressing through waters that are getting increasingly choppy, underneath the surface the requisite furious paddling is in full swing.

The variety of content that appears in the Bulletin reflects the diversity of the membership, and we are particularly grateful to all those who volunteered articles or were willing to be coerced into contributing. Citizen science, conservation, the Gratis books scheme, Soapbox Science, Twitter, ecosystem services and our annual legislative review are some of the topics to have featured in the last year. If your favourite topic has been underrepresented, get in touch and we'll do what we can to redress the balance.



Bulletin

I am grateful to our essayists John Wiens and Richard Hobbs for their support, which mostly involves receiving photographs of the two of them in a drinking establishment making unconvincing efforts to pretend they are drafting an essay on a napkin, which will subsequently get eaten by the dog which neither of them owns. I could fire the pair of them if only they didn't write such darned good pieces.

Our Book Reviews Editor Sarah Taylor is temporarily on leave of absence but we are grateful for all her efforts during the year and of course indebted to our panel of reviewers for their enthusiasm for the world of books. Bill Bewes compiles the Diary for every issue. Richard English is invariably supportive when needed.

Associate Editor Emma Sayer steps down from the role at the end of 2015. Emma's boundless energy and dynamism have driven the Bulletin into new territory via initiatives such as Rant and Reason (invented, if I remember correctly, next to a poster at a BES meeting), Speed Interviews, Buzzword Bingo, and the festival adventures of Sex and Bugs and Rock 'n Roll (All invented at the pub. Probably). The logos for the Special Interest Groups are Emma's designs. Emma's enthusiasm has remained undaunted by dealing with an editorial Eeyore and she has remained professional in the face of occasional surprises in the captions to her photographs. Our appreciation of her contribution knows no bounds.

Education

From Karen Devine, Samina Zaman and Jessica Bays

2015 saw an expansion of the BES' education, training and careers work. The year started with the sold out Undergraduate Ecological Careers Conference, which drew in a crowd of senior undergraduates and recent graduates. The BES' first Undergraduate Summer School was another successful initiative to harness the interest of budding ecologists across the UK. As well as its strong practical focus, a core element to the one week residential was the mentoring provision delivered by a group of PhD students. This year has also seen the development of two new careers advice webinar series aimed at PhD students which continue to be increasingly in demand, with a growing international audience.

In collaboration with INNGE and SfE, we have provided a free to attend student conference prior to the main Annual Meeting which, in 2015 was oversubscribed sufficiently to increase numbers and embedded within the Annual Meeting significant opportunities for students to meet with senior ecologists, undertake practical training and sharing of good practice.



To ensure the BES' careers work is reflective of the contemporary needs of our members, we launched the annual Special Interest Group Student Representative meeting which provides training and networking opportunities. We also launched the Early Careers Working Group which comprises a group of BES alumni from different ecological interests and sectors. The advisory group report to the Education, Training and Careers Committee. Following its successful pilot in 2014, we recently rolled out the second Ecological Ambassadors Scheme with a larger group, some of whom will be taking our schools outreach work internationally. We also developed a wall-chart on urban ecology; a new addition to our popular collection of schools resources.

The BES this year re-launched its Women in Ecology Mentoring Scheme, demonstrating our commitment to equal opportunities in ecology.

Education

In promoting greater engagement with Higher Education teaching staff, this year we expanded the Enhancing Fieldwork Learning Showcase to include a broader range of participants from the UK and overseas.

We initiated our public engagement programme in January 2015 with the appointment of an Engagement Officer. This has enabled us to attend a variety of events and provide a platform for three established scientists and 26 early career researchers to engage the public with their science.

One strand of the year's activity was to take the 'Sex and Bugs & Rock 'N' Roll' roadshow to music festivals. To prepare researchers for this dynamic environment, we provided formal science communication training and followed this up by facilitating the development of new ideas and activities to take to the festivals. Over the summer, one established scientist and 14 early career researchers attended four different music festivals – the highlight of which was attending Glastonbury. This programme of events provided a fantastic platform from which we engaged with in excess of 4,000 individuals.

The other strand of our activity was to attend RHS Chelsea Shower Show; here we hosted a Discovery Zone Display focusing on soil properties and provided a platform for two established scientists and five early career researchers to engage visitors with soil ecology.

As with any new initiative, the programme is evolving and in 2016 we look forward to launching our member-led regional programme and our public engagement awards that will reward and recognise member-led engagement activities.

Grants and Awards

From Rosie Hails and Amy Everard

Richard Bardgett (University of Manchester) completed his term as Grants Committee Chair. The Society would like to thank Richard for his contribution and welcome Rosie Hails (Centre for Ecology & Ecology) who will Chair the Committee until the end of 2017.

We support ecologists through five key funding schemes:

- **Large Research;** aiming to help early career ecologists establish an independent research career in ecology
- **Small Research;** supporting research projects from ecologists at all levels with new and innovative ideas
- **Ecologists in Africa;** recognising that ecologists in Africa face unique challenges in carrying out ecological research
- **Outreach;** encouraging promotion and engagement of the public with the science of ecology and/or improve skills in science communication
- **Training & Travel;** supporting the training and development of postgraduate students and their equivalents



In the September 2014 and March 2015 rounds, Grants Committee awarded 6 large research (£111,028), 21 small research (£98,897), 7 Ecologists in Africa (£58,053, September round only) and 14 Outreach (£25,224) grants. Funding was awarded to applicants from over 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, South and North America.

September 2014 – September 2015 Success Rates

Grant Type	Number of applications	Number of awards	Success Rate
Large research	42	6	14%
Small Research	125	21	17%
Ecologists in Africa	73	7	10%
Outreach	154	14	9%

Funding for Training & Travel Grants in 2015 was fully committed. In total 60 students were awarded funding to support their attendance at meetings and training courses (£25,067). The remaining funds were used to support a number of ecologists from low-income economy or lower-middle-income economy countries to attend our Annual Meeting.

Grants and Awards

In addition to our key funding schemes, we have awarded a number of prizes to outstanding individuals in recognition of their contribution towards the science of ecology. This includes our annual Anne Keymer Student Talk Prize and Poster Prize at our Annual Meeting.

Each year we welcome members to enter our Photographic Competition. 2015 proved to be our most popular year yet, with 300 images submitted! Our judges had a difficult task, but we were pleased to exhibit the amazing photos at our Annual Meeting. Congratulations to all our winners and thank you to our judges.

We continue to support the Gratis Book Scheme, which aims to provide ecology and conservation books to those from outside Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, who would otherwise be unable to obtain them. This scheme is a collaboration between ourselves (we pay for the postage), the NHBS online bookstore (who co-ordinate and organise the distribution of books), and the publishers and authors of the books (who provide the books for free). In 2014, we contributed £3,000, which enabled 324 books to be dispatched to 50 countries.

Support of £10,000 from the BES allowed 32 young biologists from 27 European Universities/institutions, spanning 12

countries, to attend Tropical Biology Association field courses in Tanzania, Borneo and Madagascar.

We continue to expand the Review College. This aims to build a community of individuals who have knowledge, experience and expertise within ecology to utilise their skills by being involved in the assessment stages of our grant applications.

Germán Orizaola, Uppsala University

Being part of the Review College is a great opportunity to help the BES achieve its goal to support promising ecological science.

Looking forward to 2016, the Society has approved a budget to update the grants database to an online based system, making the grant process much more streamlined. Implementation of the database is underway, and we aim to have the new system live for the first funding round of 2016.



Meetings

From Andrew Beckerman, Richard English, Amy Everard and Amelia Simpson



2014 finished with our first joint non-UK meeting in Lille, which was a huge success and attended by over 1,100 delegates. 2015 has kept us just as busy with three broad-reaching symposia and our Annual Meeting in Edinburgh.

Annual Meeting

For 2015, we returned to Scotland, to meet at the renowned EICC. Building on the success of 2014's international meeting, we received a very high number of abstract and thematic submissions, and ran more workshops than any previous year. Due to the high level of submissions, we held additional parallel sessions and organised two poster sessions.

Again, we were honoured to welcome world class plenary speakers:

- Luigi Boitani (Professor of Animal Ecology and Conservation Biology at the University of Rome and past President of the Society for Conservation Biology) gave the BES Lecture.
- Pat Monaghan gave the 12 Months in Ecology lecture and has spent most of her scientific career at the University

of Glasgow, where she is now the Regius Professor of Zoology (the first woman to hold this position since the chair was established in 1807).

- Josephine Pemberton (Professor of Molecular Ecology at the University of Edinburgh) gave the Tansley Lecture. She is known for her research into red deer on the Isle of Rum and Soay sheep on St Kilda.
- William Sutherland (BES President and Conservation Science Group, University of Cambridge), delivered the Presidential Address. He holds the Miriam Rothschild Chair in Conservation Biology, University of Cambridge, is a Professorial Fellow at St Catharine's College, an Associate Fellow of the Cambridge Centre for Science and Policy and is on the Management Committee for the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk.

This year's Annual Meeting continued showcasing diverse workshops, from 'Maximising the Exposure of Your Research' to 'Choosing Ecologically Sound Food' and 'How to be a Better Citizen Scientist'. Our networking and social events culminated

Meetings

with over 600 people enjoying a gala dinner of traditional Scottish fare, followed by a local ceilidh band.

Symposia

Our first Annual Symposium was ‘Demography Beyond the Population’, 23 – 25 March, Cutlers Hall, Sheffield. This symposium highlighted the emerging role of demographic tools as bridges across ecological, spatial, and temporal scales. The meeting was sold out, with more than 60% coming from outside the UK. The meeting was organized by Alden Griffith, (Wellesley College), with Rob Salguero-Gómez, (Queensland), Cory Merow, (Smithsonian) Sean McMahon, (Smithsonian) Jessica Metcalf, (Princeton) and Dylan Childs (Sheffield), who organised a very popular extra day of pre-symposium workshops. The main talking points of the meeting, besides science, were the fantastic local brewery tour and the outstanding chandeliers!

In April, *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* held its 5th Anniversary Symposium at Charles Darwin House, London and in Canada. See page 32 for the details. Our final symposium was The Ecology and Evolution of Emerging Plant Pests and Pathogens: Challenges to Global Food Security and Ecosystem Reliance and

was held at University of Exeter in Cornwall. This symposium brought together experts in genetics, cell biology, ecology, evolution, plant pathology, modelling, microbiology, climate change, remote sensing, agriculture and forestry to synthesize recent research into emerging plant pests and pathogens (EPPPs) and share findings across disciplines.

2015 was another year our Special Interest Groups enhanced our offering to members and non-members and worked with a large number of ecological communities. Currently we have groups covering: Agricultural Ecology, Aquatic Ecology, Citizen Science, Climate Change Ecology, Conservation Ecology, Ecological Genetics Ecology, Forest Ecology, Macroecology, Parasites and Pathogens, Peatlands Ecology, Plants, Soils and Ecosystems, Plant Physiology Ecology, Quantitative Ecology and Tropical Ecology. This year’s highlights have included international meetings with Indian agricultural groups, joint events with European ecological societies in macroecology, conservation policy meetings, climate change and much more.

Please contact Amelia Simpson if you are interested in establishing a new group: Amelia@BritishEcologicalSociety.org

Membership

From Andrew Pullin and Bill Bewes

Membership of the Society is growing year on year with over 5,000 members from all sectors of ecological science and 83 different countries.

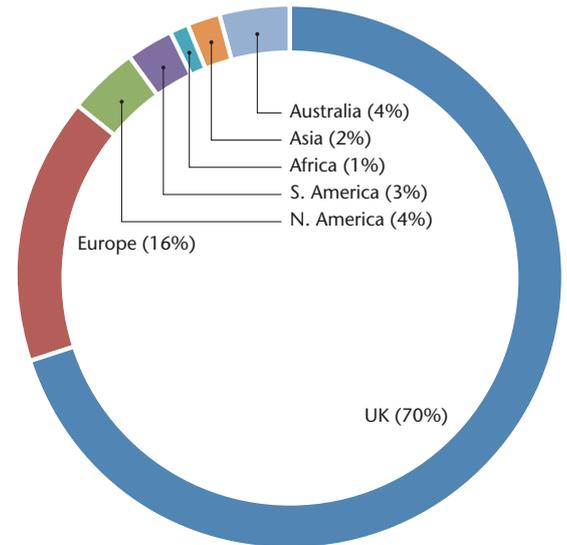
In the Society's five year strategic plan published last year, we are looking to grow and support membership in underrepresented areas including ecologists working outside of academia and overseas. We have a target to reach 6,000 members by 2017. The size of our membership is crucial to our strength as an organisation. Not only does increased membership improve the networking opportunities at our events and the impact we have on policy makers and the media, but also promotes the importance of ecological science to society in general.

There has never been a better time to be a BES member with so many different ways you can get involved with all the Society's activities. As well as our world leading journals and scientific meetings, we have fourteen different Special Interest Groups, our Twitter feed, Facebook group, YouTube channels and blogs.

BES members have been instrumental in delivering our outreach program at festivals and events up and down the country. We are truly grateful to all members who have given up their time and expertise helping to run our events and contributed to our publications and consultation responses.



Geographical Breakdown of Membership



Policy

From Juliet Vickery, Jackie Caine and Ben Connor

2015 has been a year of change both politically, with the UK general election ushering in a new government, and personally, with Ceri Margerison leaving the BES after seven years and Jackie Caine joining as our new Policy Manager. Sincere thanks to Ceri for her fantastic contribution to BES policy.

To meet the ambitious aims of our new strategic plan, we conducted a comprehensive review of our policy work;



identifying how to build a stronger, more influential voice for ecology in tune with our members' needs. This process was shaped by a Task and Finish Group chaired by Peter Costigan, whose findings will guide the launch of an exciting suite of new activities in 2016.

Influencing Policy

Ahead of the general election, we raised the profile of ecological issues through our 'People, Politics and the Planet: Any Questions?' debate, delivered in partnership with the Sibthorp Trust and the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Over 300 people gathered in London on 9th March to put their questions to a panel of politicians including Natural Environment Minister Lord de Mauley, Shadow Minister Barry Gardiner MP, and Green Party leader Natalie Bennett. Watch the debate, expertly chaired by broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby, on our website¹. Following the election we published 'Ecology Matters', outlining the value of ecological knowledge for society, the economy and the environment and our priorities for this Parliament².

¹ www.britishecologicalsociety.org/public-policy/policy-events/2015-events/environmental-question-time
² www.britishecologicalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/BES-Impact-of-Ecology.pdf

Policy

We continued to promote the importance of ecology to policy-makers throughout the year. In June, with our partners in the Natural Capital Initiative we launched the Valuing our Life Support Systems summit report³ at a packed parliamentary reception. We were back in Parliament in October, as President Elect Professor Sue Hartley gave evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee inquiry on genetically modified insects.

Synthesising Information

Following a lively workshop at the 2014 Annual Meeting and input from members, we contributed the latest ecological evidence to Wildlife and Countryside Link's response to the European Commission's "fitness check" of the Birds and Habitats Directives, and made our own submission to the European Commission's public consultation.

We explored how to improve the flow of information between ecological research and conservation policy in our joint symposium with the Conservation Special Interest Group, attended by over 100 scientists, conservationists and policy-makers.

Equipping the membership

We continue to offer a range of opportunities to members to

develop skills and increase the impact of their work. In January our fellowship scheme at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) saw 2014 fellow Beth Brockett launch her POSTnote, 'Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from crops' at a parliamentary breakfast meeting, and 2015 fellow Kirsten Miller, started her placement in September working on natural capital.

Members also gained valuable policy experience through our shadowing scheme, which saw Dr Rory O'Connor and Dr Jenni McDonald paired with Julie Girling MEP and Defra Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Ian Boyd. Rebecca Shellock and Amy Fensome also joined the BES policy staff as part of our extended internship programme.

Our Scottish Policy Group (SPG) continues to grow, strengthening links with civil servants and MSPs by attending Scottish Environment Week for the first time, and holding events on conservation conflicts and the use of social media in science-policy communications. The success of the SPG is testament to the commitment and initiative of founding Chair Professor Rob Brooker, who now hands over the reins to Dr Ruth Mitchell; many thanks to Rob. Our Welsh Policy Group will launch in 2016, with co-chairs Dr Angela Watkins and Dr Eleanor Kean at the helm.

³ www.naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk/portfolio-items/valuing-our-life-support-systems-2014

Publications

From Alan Gray and Catherine Hill

The BES's portfolio of journals remains one of our flagship products. While each of the journals is unique in its subject coverage and editorial vision, they are all continually looking for new ways to develop and improve the services they offer to authors. As detailed in the BES Strategic Plan, during 2015 we have identified and started monitoring a number of key performance indicators across the BES journals. These are certainly not limited to Impact Factor but include metrics such as turnaround times, gender diversity of editorial boards and social media presence. Early signs for the journals are very positive and we plan to report more widely on these indicators in the coming months with the journal teams committed to tracking and improving these where possible.

2015 marked the fifth anniversary of the launch of *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*. At a time of significant change within academic publishing, *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* has successfully established its niche, with high numbers of submissions and excellent readership figures. For more information about how the journal celebrated its anniversary, read the *Methods* section later in this report.



Within scholarly publishing, particularly in life sciences, there is a continued move towards open and reproducible data. Our data archiving mandate has now been in place for almost two years and it has had no discernible impact on submissions, with these continuing to rise across the journals. We continue to monitor funder and journal policies in this area and work with our authors to ensure that the mandate is adhered to with minimal inconvenience, for example, by partnering with Dryad and covering charges in that repository but also allowing alternative author-selected repositories to be used if applicable.

During 2015, the team have worked on another guide for early career researchers (and those who require a refresher) and *How to Get Published* was published in November 2015. All our guides can be downloaded free of charge on www.BritishEcologicalSociety.org/besguides.

Publications

We would like to welcome the new team members who have joined us in 2015 – Alice Plane, Assistant Editor for *Journal of Applied Ecology* and Emilie Aimé, covering Andrea Baier's maternity leave as Managing Editor for three of our journals, plus our two new Editors, Craig White and Nate Sanders. Also, a big thank you to Tim Coulson who stepped down as Editor on *Journal of Animal Ecology* earlier this year after nine years' dedicated service.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone for the hard work that they put into the BES journals. It is the enormous contribution from our Editors, Associate Editors, reviewers, Publications Committee members and committed editorial office staff that ensures our journals remain so successful. Many of these will be attending the Annual Meeting in Edinburgh, so please do let us know your thoughts on our journals. There is more detailed information regarding all the journal highlights from 2015 in the following sections of this Report.

Functional Ecology



From Chuck Fox, Duncan Irschick, Alan Knapp, Ken Thompson, Craig White, Andrea Baier and Jennifer Meyer

- *Functional Ecology* became an online-only journal at the start of 2015 and has increased the number of issues from six to twelve per year, following the trend in academic publishing away from print.
- *Functional Ecology*'s 2014 ISI Impact Factor was 4.828, placing it 15th out of 144 journals in the Ecology category. We are also ranked 11th among all Ecology journals by Google Scholar based on their h-5 index which measures impact of a journal (rather than individual papers) over a longer timeframe than does the impact factor.
- Craig White joined the team of Senior Editors in August 2015. Craig's research focusses on describing and understanding the causes and consequences of physiological variation in animals. His group studies a range of traits, with an emphasis on metabolic rate, water loss, and breathing patterns, and employs a variety of approaches, including manipulative experiments, comparative studies, experimental evolution, and quantitative genetic analyses.
- Our Associate Editor Emma Sayer has taken on a new role of Review Editor. Emma will now take on responsibility for all Reviews not part of a Special Feature for the journal.
- The 2014 Haldane Prize for Young Investigators was awarded to Scott Ferenberg for his paper '*Smooth bark surfaces can defend trees against insect attack: resurrecting a 'slippery' hypothesis*'. Alan Knapp also interviewed Scott for the *Functional Ecology* podcast.
- We published the Special Feature '*Ecology of Organisms in Urban Environments*', which drew attention to the plethora of opportunities that await researchers investigating the ecology and evolution of organisms in urban environments.
- To celebrate the United Nation's International Year of Soils 2015, Emma Sayer also edited a new Virtual Issue: Making the most of microbes. The enormous diversity and high functional overlap of soil microbes makes this an exciting but challenging area of research in functional ecology. This virtual issue takes a look at some of the subsequent advances



Functional Ecology

in ecosystem research, which have been made possible by considering microbial processes and populations within the bigger picture of ecosystem function.

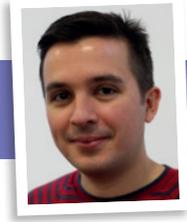
- We also published an Extended Spotlight: Community Phylogenetics and Ecosystem Functioning. These papers provide a much-needed evaluation of the state-of-the-field of phylogenetics in community ecology, and provide concrete guidelines for the next generation of studies. Accompanying this was a new Virtual Issue which brings together various important research papers on the topic.
- Chuck Fox has been investigating peer review quality and different types of bias in peer review using author, reviewer and editor data from *Functional Ecology* between 2004 and 2014. He has found that patterns of authorship on papers submitted to the Journal differ between men and women, and that the peer review process differs in some aspects

depending on editor and reviewer gender, but that neither author, reviewer or editor gender affect outcomes (review scores or decisions) of the editorial or peer review process. This project has led to three papers: Fox & Burns 2015 (on title structure and success in peer review); Fox, Burns & Meyer 2015 (on influence of editor and reviewer gender on peer review); Fox *et al.* 2015 (on gender difference in patterns of authorship, in press).

- A paper finding that pesticides can change spider personality gathered press in a range of places reaching very different groups, including the Smithsonian.com, ModernFarmer.com and CBC. Another study, which found that in an apparently monogamous song bird, males that slept late were most likely to be cheated on by their partner, also garnered significant interest, being covered by, among others, Sciences et Avenir, Discovery News and The Huffington Post.

www.functionalecology.org
[@FunEcology](https://twitter.com/FunEcology)

Journal of Animal Ecology



From Ken Wilson, Ben Sheldon, Jean-Michel Gaillard, Nate Sanders, Erika Newton and Simon Hoggart

- In September, Tim Coulson stepped down from the Senior Editor board. Tim was on the board for almost 9 years and served as Executive Editor for 3 years, guiding the journal into the era of freely accessible data, an issue he has been passionate about for many years. Tim was also responsible for the introduction of our highly successful “How to...” paper type.
- Nate Sanders from the University of Copenhagen joined the Senior Editor board in September. Nate is interested in macroecology, global change ecology and community ecology, often focussing on ants as study organisms.
- Two “How to...” papers have been published, the first by Puth *et al.* ‘*On the variety of methods for calculating confidence intervals by bootstrapping*’ and the second by Farine and Whitehead (84:5 pp 1144–1163) on ‘*Constructing, conducting and interpreting animal social network analysis*’.
- A Virtual Issue on social network analysis was produced to complement the Farine and Whitehead “How to...” paper.
- A joint Virtual Issue was produced with *Journal of Applied Ecology* and *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* on Monitoring Wildlife. The Virtual Issue was published for the Wildlife Society conference in the USA. It features a selection of papers that focus on new methods and technologies for wildlife monitoring.
- *Journal of Animal Ecology*’s 2014 impact factor was 4.504 which placed the Journal second of the ISI Zoology list and 24th in the Ecology list.
- The 2014 Elton Prize was awarded to James L. Maino from University of Melbourne, Australia for his paper ‘*Reconciling theories for metabolic scaling*’. The editors liked that James and his co-authors tested a priori predictions from their parameterised model against a real dataset for mammalian respiration, with encouraging results.



Journal of Animal Ecology

- The Journal Associate Editor board has continued to diversify, with the percentage of female Associate Editors rising to 31%. We are pleased to welcome, Benjamin Dantzer, Elizabeth Derryberry, Jenny Gill, Bethany Hoye, Julie Morand-Ferron, Ally Phillimore, Laura Prugh and Celine Teplitsky as new Associate Editors in 2015. Jonathan Newman, Kate Jones, Brett Sandercock, James Jones, Sonia Altizer and Alexandre Roulin stepped down from the board in 2015. We would like to thank them all for their hard work for the Journal.
- A number of our papers have gathered significant press interest, including '*A sting in the spit: widespread cross-infection of multiple RNA viruses across wild and managed bees*' by McMahon *et al.* (84:3 615-624) and a paper revealing the forging behaviour of ocean sunfish by Nakamura *et al.* (84:3 590-603) both of which featured on the BBC.
- The Journal blog has continued to grow with 14 posts this year attracting over 9,850 views. Posts have been from a broad range of authors including Senior Editors, Associate Editors and authors. The most popular posts include Tim Coulson's post on modelling and Dave Goulson's post on Biodiversity v. Intensive Farming, both of which received over 1,000 views. Other popular posts include Jean-Michel's response to Tim's post on modelling and author Rob Pringle's World Elephant day blog, which both received over 500 views.

www.journalofanimalecology.org
@AnimalEcology

Journal of Applied Ecology



From Marc Cadotte, Mark Whittingham, Jos Barlow, Nathalie Pettorelli, Philip Stephens, Erika Newton and Alice Plane

- The Journal trialed an open application process which resulted in the recruitment of 15 new Associate Editors. The campaign was very successful and we received over 50 applications from ecologists who wanted to get involved with the Journal. The new Associate Editors will expand the range of expertise of the current editorial board and assist with the areas where we receive a particularly high number of submissions.
- The *Journal of Applied Ecology* Associate Editor Mentoring Programme has been a huge success, with the Associate Editor mentees finding the programme to be a valuable experience for better understanding and engaging with the peer review and editorial processes. It was extended to be a 12-month placement to allow mentees to assess a wider variety of manuscripts and follow more papers through to the final decision. We will be continuing this initiative next year and have mentees in place to start in January 2016.
- The Journal published a Virtual Issue on Ecological Restoration, edited by Associate Editor, Jeremy James. It is formed of 20 papers, which focus on testing and advancing ecological theory to improve restoration outcomes, integrating knowledge into practice, prioritizing management efforts and the effects of restoration on ecosystem services.
- A joint Virtual Issue with *Journal of Animal Ecology* and *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* on Monitoring Wildlife was published for the Wildlife Society conference in the USA. It features a selection of papers that focus on new methods and technologies for wildlife monitoring.
- The first three Policy Direction articles were published. These articles are freely accessible and have been viewed over 3000 times. Their focus is to inform and improve policy for a wide range of subjects and to provide a broad policy context for a topic, relating it to the wider issues around constrained decision making.

Journal of Applied Ecology

- The Journal has published six Practitioner's Perspective articles and these have been downloaded over 5000 times. Recent publications have been about using ecological theory to develop recovery criteria for an endangered butterfly and co-creation of individual-based models by practitioners and modellers to inform environmental decision-making.
- The 2014 Southwood Prize was awarded to Katharina Gerstner for her paper 'Effects of land use on plant diversity – A global meta-analysis', which has been viewed over 1000 times.
- The Journal has set up a webpage designed to help authors to promote their research and published articles, with tips on Search Engine Optimization, organising a press release, using social media, writing a blog post and more.
- Over sixty posts have been published on The Applied Ecologist's blog, with over 10,000 unique visitors accessing them. Posts are from authors, Associate Editors and anyone interested in discussing anything relating to the interface between ecological science and the management of biological resources. There have been posts on a wide range of topics including restoration, ecological monitoring, biological control and forest management.
- The Journal coordinated over 20 press releases and published papers attracted media attention in over 60 different new outlets, including The Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian, BBC online and Nature Research Highlights.
- *Journal of Applied Ecology* articles were downloaded over 600,000 times this year.
- The Journal now has over 8000 Twitter followers, which is an increase of around 30% from the end of last year. Over 700 tweets were sent out, with over 600,000 tweet impressions.
- The Journal's 2014 impact factor is 4.564, ranking it 20th out of 144 ecology journals indexed in ISI.
- Alice Plane joined the editorial office team as Assistant Editor for the Journal.

*www.journalofappliedecology.org
@JAppliedEcology*

Journal of Ecology

David Gibson, Amy Austin, Richard Bardgett, Mark Rees, Andrea Baier and Lauren Sandhu



- The 2014 Impact Factor for *Journal of Ecology* is 5.521, placing the Journal 12th out of 144 journals in the ISI Ecology category and 13th out of 200 journals in the Plant Science category.
- Special Features guest-edited by a range of outstanding ecologists based in institutions around the world continue to be a prominent feature in the Journal. Three Special Features were published in 2015. In issue 103:1 we published a Special Feature entitled “*forest resilience, tipping points and global change processes*” guest edited by Christopher Reyer, Anja Rammig, Niels Brouwers and Fanny Langerwisch. This Special Feature was based on two INTECOL 2013 symposia. Then in issue 103:4 the Journal published a Special Feature on “*eco-evolutionary dynamics in plants: interactive processes at overlapping timescales and their implications*”. This Special Feature was guest edited by two Journal of Ecology Associate Editors, Roberto Salguero-Gómez and Richard Shefferson. The third Special Feature was published in issue 103:6 and it focused on biogeochemical cycling. This Special Feature was guest edited by Journal of Ecology

Senior Editor Amy Austin and Associate Editor Amy Zanne. All of the lead and/or senior authors of this final Special Feature are women. Both Amy Austin and Amy Zanne wrote blog posts from the Journal of Ecology blog focussing on women in ecology and their Special Feature.

- Two Special Features are planned for next year; amongst them is a cross-journal Special Feature which will be published in all five of the BES journals.
- In 2015 the following Associate Editors joined the editorial board: Meghan Avolio, David Edwards, Jacquelyn Gill, Andy Hector, Laura Huenneke, Amy Iler, Emily Lines, Rebecca McCulley, Carol Thornber, Nicole van Dam and Amy Zanne. We also appointed Pierre Mariotte as the Journal of Ecology blog editor. David Coomes, Ellen Damschen, Gerlinde de Deyn, Robert Jones, Eelke Jongejans, Sandra Lavorel, Jonathan Newman and Melinda Smith left the board this year and we would like to thank them all for their service to the Journal.



Journal of Ecology

- The 2014 Harper Prize for best paper by a young author was awarded to Michiel Veldhuis for his paper '*A novel mechanism for grazing lawn formation: large herbivore-induced modification of the plant–soil water balance*'.
- Four Biological Flora of the British Isles accounts were published in 2015, on *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, *Crambe maritima*, *Neottia ovata* and *Ophrys sphegodes* (by Essl et al., 2015; Jacquemyn & Hutchings 2015; Kotlínek, Těšitelová & Jersáková 2015; and Sanyal & Decocq 2015, respectively).
- In 2015 we have published Virtual Issues on “charismatic orchids” and “marine ecology”. Along with the other BES journals we also published a Virtual Issue to coincide with the 8th Annual International Open Access Week.
- The Journal will also launch a new annual review paper, the *Harper Review*, at the BES Annual Meeting in December 2015. The *Harper Review* is an invited review paper that focuses on a hot ecological topic.
- We continue to publish interviews on the *Journal of Ecology* blog and the BES journals' SoundCloud account simultaneously. In 2015 interviews with Hal Caswell, Scott Collins, Tony Davy and Carol Thornber were published.
- *Journal of Ecology* has almost 10,000 followers on Twitter and over 4000 likes on Facebook.
- In April 2015 Caroline Brophy wrote an opinion piece for the Journal blog entitled “*Should ecologists be banned from using p-values?*” To date the post has been viewed over 1,500 times, making it our most popular blog post ever.

www.journalofecology.org
@JEcology

Methods in Ecology and Evolution

From Rob Freckleton, Bob O'Hara, Jana Vamosi, Andrea Baier and Chris Grieves

- *Methods in Ecology and Evolution's* 2014 ISI Impact Factor is 6.554, ranking the Journal 9th out of 144 journals in the Ecology category.
- The 2014 Robert May Prize was awarded to Laure Gallien for her paper 'Identifying the signal of environmental filtering and competition in invasion patterns – a contest of approaches from community ecology'.
- Andy Tatem, Oliver Pybus, Shinichi Nakagawa, Liam Revell and Brian O'Meara have stepped down from the Board. Helene Muller-Landau will be leaving at the end of 2015. We thank them for the work they have done for the Journal.
- Susan Johnston, Natalie Cooper and Luísa Carvalho have all joined the Associate Editor Board. We are currently in the process of recruiting another four new AEs.
- We celebrated the Journal's 5th anniversary in April with a 16-hour Anniversary Symposium, starting in the UK and continued in Canada. The event was livestreamed for free around the world and was watched on every continent (except Antarctica). Over 1,500 people watched at least part of the Symposium globally. The event was an exciting opportunity to highlight the wide range of topics covered in the Journal. The UK side of the event was held in Charles Darwin House and was chaired by Senior Editors Rob Freckleton and Bob. In Canada, the event was chaired by Senior Editor Jana Vamosi and held at the University of Calgary. Speakers included Associate Editors, a former Young Investigator Prize winner, and an author of the most cited *Methods* article. They presented on topics ranging from metabarcoding and genomics to model selection and data analysis. Talks are available as videos from the Journal website and YouTube channel.





Methods in Ecology and Evolution

- In April, we published the Special Feature 'Opportunities at the interface of Ecology and Statistics'. This was guest edited by David Warton and arose from the July 2013 Eco-Stats Symposium at the University of New South Wales, Australia.
- We published over 20 Applications papers in 2015, which are freely available to everybody and represent a unique source of citable descriptions of new methods and techniques in ecology and evolution. This paper type was launched in 2010 and has proved to be very popular.
- We published one Virtual Issue in 2015: 'Advances in Phylogenetic Methods'. This was timed to coincide with the Evolution 2015 conference in July. *Methods* also contributed to the 'Young Investigator Awards Virtual Issue' (all BES journals) and the 'Monitoring Wildlife' Virtual Issue (with *Journal of Animal Ecology* and *Journal of Applied Ecology*).
- In September we launched a new series of blog posts titled 'Publishing Tips and Tricks'. We plan to have a post each month in this series dealing with different aspects of the publishing process. These posts will give advice on everything from choosing the right journal and writing cover letters to responding to reviewers and article promotion.
- The Journal now has over 7500 Twitter followers, 5000 likes on Facebook and 1750 Google+ followers. The Journal blog has had over 40,000 views from 160 different countries in 2015.

www.methodsinecologyandevolution.org
@MethodsEcolEvol

Ecology and Evolution

From Andrew Beckerman, Allen Moore and Kate Harrison



- *Ecology and Evolution* continues to partner with sixteen of the top journals within the ecology and evolutionary fields, including the five BES journals. This fully open access journal encourages both direct submissions and receives papers from its partner journals transferred with any previously conducted reviews, speeding up the review process and avoiding duplication of effort.
- Direct submissions and transfers from supporter journals continue to grow. Since launch, 11,777 manuscripts have been referred to the journal, with 1490 of these authors requesting to transfer their manuscript for consideration by *Ecology and Evolution*.
- *Ecology and Evolution* does not chase Impact Factors, nor use impact as a barrier to publish. However, bibliometrics can be a useful guide as to how well the content is received in the community. Our 2014 ISI Impact Factor jumped to 2.320, ranking us 63/144 in the Ecology category.
- Article downloads during 2014 were over 600,000 – a 66% increase from 2013.
- Two papers published in 2015 have received significant engagement: *The relationship between manuscript title structure and success*, C.W. Fox & C.S. Burns, has one of the highest Almetric scores in the journal; *Reconciling actual and perceived rates of predation by domestic cats*, J.L. McDonald et al. was reported in the media and continues to be popular on social media.
- The Editorial Board has been expanded to include 63 Associate Editors, based in institutions all round the world.
- The Editors make regular appearances at relevant conferences all over the world and would welcome your feedback on the journal.

www.ecolevol.org

Ecological Reviews

From Phil Warren and Kate Harrison



- *Ecological Reviews* publishes on topics that have achieved a critical mass of knowledge in the past five years. Each volume synthesises an area of important ecological research into a digestible format and provides a solid foundation for those looking to expand their knowledge into new areas.
- Two new volumes were published in 2015 and both are seeing excellent sales: *Trophic Ecology*, edited Hanley & La Pierre; and *Conflicts in Conservation*, edited by Redpath, Gutiérrez, Wood & Young. *Conflicts in Conservation* has been reviewed in The Times and on the BES Policy Blog – both volumes have been spotted on the shelves in Foyles' flagship store.
- Two volumes are scheduled for publication in 2016: *Peatland Restoration and Ecosystem Services* edited by Bonn, Allot, Evans, Joosten & Stoneman; and *Agricultural Resilience: Perspectives from Ecology and Economics* edited by Gardner, Ramsden & Hails.
- Ivette Perfecto, University of Michigan, joined the Editorial Board in September. The success of the series depends on our team of board members for proposing and reviewing ideas for new volumes, so we are delighted to have Ivette on board and look forward to developing the series further.
- We aim to publish more policy-relevant volumes and to achieve this we now work more closely with the Policy team at the BES when developing volume ideas. We hope this new relationship will increase the reach of the series and boost the profile of *Ecological Reviews* within the BES's activities.
- The Editorial Board met in February 2015 and the Management Board met in June 2015 to discuss current and future volumes, sales and marketing, as well as changes to the workflow in order to streamline the process for editors. We are always interested to hear your ideas on topics to cover so please send us any ideas you may have for future volumes.

www.BritishEcologicalSociety.org/publications/ecological-reviews

Special Interest Groups

Agricultural Ecology Group

From Barbara Smith

This year the Agricultural Ecology group adventured away from the UK British mainland. 10 people from the Agricultural Ecology Group travelled to Kolkata, India, where the BES and the Society for Agroecology, India hosted a joint meeting. 50 people attended over 3 days and at the end of the meeting there was a workshop to determine shared research priorities. These have been uploaded to a file-sharing site from where we hope good collaborations will be formed. Next steps for the Initiative are to host a workshop and an 'Indian breakfast' at the BES Annual Meeting.

The Agricultural Ecology Group General Meeting was held at Queens University, Belfast, organised by Nick Hesford and Caroline Finlay, final year PhD students who did an absolutely fabulous job. The programme of speakers was impressive including Jules Pretty, John Finn and Tim Benton. The meeting circulated well on social media.

In June, Harper Adams University hosted a 'Re-thinking Agriculture: Farmers Perspective Workshop' to share current innovative research, identify what 'sustainable agriculture' means to stakeholders, to establish the key challenges in sustainable farming and discuss potential solutions. The meeting was attended by farmers (10), agricultural consultants and advisors (7) and scientists (6). The output will form the basis of a publication led by Harper Adams.

In a session that aimed to make links with the permaculture community, Les Firbank and Naomi van der Velden ran a session on Building an Evidence Base for Permaculture at the International Permaculture Convergence held in London. There was an interesting interaction between people with a conventional scientific approach and those with a more holistic approach to recording and collating evidence. The output will be fed in to the Permaculture Associations new initiative to develop more systematic research. In a similar vein a small meeting was held at Coventry University, in collaboration





Special Interest Groups

with RegenAg to discuss Building an Evidence Base for Holistic Agriculture. Again there were interesting commonalities but also differences in the approach of natural scientists, farmers and social scientists.

It was a busy bit productive year for the Agricultural Ecology group with a focus on making links with other groups and societies. The aim is to continue this approach in 2016.

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Special Interest Groups

Citizen Science

From Helen Roy, Michael Pocock and Rachel Pateman

It has been another busy year for the Citizen Science Special Interest Group with a range of exciting events.

BES provided sponsorship for the inaugural conference of the Citizen Science Association at San José in California (<http://citizenscienceassociation.org/conference/citizen-science-2015/>). Jonathan Silvertown attended on behalf of the group and reported that it was a huge success with over 700 delegates present from all over the world. Ecology was very well represented in spoken and poster presentations. It was also great to be able to support The Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) in their 20th anniversary celebrations which provided the opportunity for many organisations and individuals (87 in total) to highlight their important work in conservation and wildlife recording.

In May, Michael Pocock, Hilary Geoghegan, Alison Dyke and Rachel Pateman hosted two days of citizen science at Charles Darwin House.



The first day was a citizen science training day. One participant described it as ‘advanced topics’ in citizen science, or “what is helpful to know, but no one’s told you about”. An audience of 50 people considered topics, presented by a range of experts, each of which support excellence in citizen science projects. We considered very practical subjects such as project evaluation, working with children and schools, working with communities to co-create projects, engaging the media, and best practice in data management and data protection. We also considered broader (and arguably trickier) topics such as privacy, intellectual property and ethics. Watch out for the briefing note summarising the day coming out soon.

The second day focused on the ‘human’ element of citizen science – specifically the volunteers, professional scientists, practitioners and policymakers that make up this ever-growing field. The event attracted over 40 researchers and practitioners interested in the social dimensions of citizen science. A widely accepted definition of citizen science is the participation of non-professionals in professional science

Special Interest Groups

projects. However, more work needs to be done to reflect on participation in citizen science – a research approach that is developing at a breakneck pace. Dr Geoghegan said: “My research area of enthusiasm, namely the emotional affiliation we have towards things and activities we care about, is of significant interest to professional scientists, research councils and policymakers as they establish the ways in which they will engage with citizen science in the future. Without an understanding of why people do and do not participate, citizen science projects may fail.” You can find tweets on the subject via the hashtags #BESCitSci and #CitSciPeople.

The festival Latitude www.latitudefestival.com provided the perfect setting for three days of citizen science on (and below) the ground! Marc Botham (ecologist at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology) stated “All the activities on the Big Biology Bus worked well, visitors went away enthused by ecology and the collaboration with other organisations was great. It would be good to contribute to activities of this kind in the future.” Read more in the excellent blog by Victoria Burton <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/blog/studentblogs/victoria14/2015/07/28/my-first-music-festival-with-science>.

So from the rural setting of Latitude to Urban Ecology in Glasgow – Hannah Grist (RSPB) organised a one day event “Science in the City” on 3rd September



2015. The event included invited speakers Caron Cooper (North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences), Jonathan Silvertown (Edinburgh University) and Sarah West (York University) alongside a number of other contributors and including citizen science in action over lunch.

You can find out more on Twitter #urbancitsci

We are extremely grateful to the British Ecological Society for all the support, guidance and enthusiasm that comes our way and we are looking forward to an equally eventful 2016.

CitizenScience@BritishEcologicalSociety.org

Special Interest Groups



Quantitative Ecology Group

From Dylan Childs, Attila Lazar, Matthew Smith and Rick Stafford

As a group we've had a few changes this year, following on from a social event in a Belgium beer pub in Lille. Firstly, we've changed our name, from Computational Ecology, to Quantitative Ecology. We think this more accurately represents what we do as a SIG, and is something more people can identify with.

We hope we are a SIG for people with an interest in using quantitative techniques (anything from simple statistics through to complex computer simulations), rather than a SIG for experts in quantitative ecology. We've found this a useful approach this year and have been involved with events with other SIGs, as well as running our own training sessions in quantitative techniques.

We've also greatly expanded our committee to include a range of new roles:

Social Media: Miriam Grace and Chris Clements

Education and Training: Susan Jarvis and Duncan Procter

Online Resources: Dominic Bennett and Simon Dellicour

Policy: Angela Watkins

Blog master: Laura Graham

We're currently working on a number of online guides and developing training events for next year, based on surveys of what ecologists want to know about more quantitative aspects of the work.

If you want to know more, drop in to one of our sessions in Edinburgh and we'll be happy to speak to you about what we do. Or follow us on Facebook or Twitter, or read our regular round up of all things quantitative and ecological in our weekly blog.

@BES_QE_SIG

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BESQuantitativeEcology

Blog: <https://besquantitativeecology.wordpress.com>

Special Interest Groups

Forest Ecology Group

From Dan Bebber

The FEG is undergoing a process of ecological succession: Secretary Dan Bebber (Exeter) is bowing out after three years, and Alan Jones (Earthwatch) will be taking over. Alan organized a FEG-sponsored meeting on Linking Ecological Research Across Wytham Woods, held in Oxford in May. The audience comprised over 60 academics, early career researchers and keenly interested people from conservation organisations, who had arrived from across the UK and Europe with the aim of enhancing research collaboration across the network. Peter Savill (Oxford) kicked off the meeting with a welcome briefing on the historic ecological importance of Wytham. Keynote speaker, Prof. Hans Cornelissen (VU Amsterdam) demonstrated the wealth of knowledge that can be learnt by understanding the hidden processes of decomposition on the forest floor, while showing how these link to other aspects of woodland ecology.

In the past year, FEG has supported an unprecedented number of forest-related meetings and events, from a workshop run by the Sylva Foundation in Oxfordshire to help teachers engage their students in forest ecology, to a policy seminar at the European Parliament run by Barbara Knowles (Royal Society of Biology) on the future of wood pastures across Europe. Indeed, wood pastures were the hot topic of the year, with a meeting organized by Suzanne Perry (Natural England) at Rydal Hall in Ambleside, at which 50 attendees discussed the role of wood pasture in the Uplands.

Most recently the annual Waxcap identification workshop organized by Ian Rotherham (Sheffield Hallam) took budding mycologists on a successful hunt for dozens of wood pasture fungi. This year's programme followed earlier workshops and last year's national conference on "waxcaps as indicators of grasslands and wood pastures of conservation significance". With good weather allowing a flush of waxcaps in time for the field trips it was a great success, with delegates travelling from across England and Wales to take part. There was opportunity



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to visit previously unrecorded sites – which came up trumps, to produce around 10+ Waxcap species, plus several calvarias, and entolomas, and many other grassland and wood-pasture fungi. Soon there will be a beginner's on-line guide on the www.ukeconet.org website and next year the course will visit the lowlands! As one participant stated, 'you are the only ones providing this sort of training'.

Speaking of hot topics, Imma Oliveras (Wageningen) and Catherine Parr (Liverpool) ran a Fire Ecology meeting at Liverpool, attended by 17 researchers from across Europe. Talks covered a diverse range of topics including fire in the tropics, threats from altered fire regimes to conflicts in moorland burning. Colin Courtney-Mustaphi (York), Sam Bowers (Edinburgh) and Donna Hawthorne (Trinity College Dublin) gave presentation about their research, which highlighted challenges in reconstructing paleoecological fire regimes, and challenges in correlative studies on fire-prone ecosystems. Several other attendees had posters about their

research. After the talks, the workshop actively engaged participants by splitting in two groups, and discussing a series of topics: key questions in fire ecology, challenges in for science and management, and potential solutions to the challenges. The meeting ended with an open discussion about these topics. It was clear that there are substantial challenges to fire management with threats from fire suppression, woody encroachment and generally negative perceptions of fires.

An article on the FEG blog (<http://besfeg.wordpress.com>) highlighted the danger to tropical forests of the growing El Nino event back in May, which has since proved to be tragically prescient with reports of forest fires across Southeast Asia. The blog will continue to be the main source of FEG information so make sure you click Follow to receive email alerts on new posts, and follow us on Twitter @BESForests. Next year we will be funding more exciting forest events, and hope to see you there.

@BESForests

<http://besfeg.wordpress.com>

Forests@BritishEcologicalSociety.org

Special Interest Groups

Parasite and Pathogen Ecology and Evolution Group

From Andy Fenton with Jo Lello

This year so far, the SIG has run two of its for planned events. In the first we teamed up with the British Society for Parasitology, Liverpool, holding ecology and evolutionary themed sessions within the wider conference. As in previous years, the attendance was excellent and our rooms were completely packed out. Our SIG social in Salt Dog Slims in the centre of Liverpool was a great bash and we made some great new contacts. We hope to continue the BES involvement with BSP in the coming year in London.

Our main event so far this year has been a Transmission Research Retreat (Gregynog Hall – Mid-Wales). This event, aimed chiefly at established researchers, brought together 37 academics with the aim of unlocking the mysteries of parasite transmission. The idea of the retreat was to give focused, uninterrupted (no phone reception and limited internet) attention to a research topic, with the aim of gaining specific research outputs, e.g. papers and grants. The event was held over three days (evening of 21st Sept 2015 to lunch on the



24th) at the beautiful Gregynog Hall, in mid-Wales. It attracted delegates from as far afield as Ottawa, Newfoundland, Australia and Pennsylvania, two of whom had no prior SIG association and heard about the event on Twitter.



Transmission Research Retreat Delegates, Gregynog Hall, Mid-Wales, 21-24 Sept 2015.



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The structure involved increasingly focused discussions in whole and sub-groups plus plenty of 'free time' for informal discussion. Discussions were detailed and involved some good natured disagreement, but all ended in excellent new insights and specific outputs. Delegates universally reported an extremely high level of intellectual stimulation and the number of intended outputs from the meeting is substantial (7 to 10 journal articles are in production) and we submitted a proposal for a special issue in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. We believe this stands as a great proof of principle of how these kinds of meetings might work and hope we have the opportunity to run similar events in the future.

Still to come in November is our Early Career Event 'The future of disease ecology.' Registration is still open at (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-future-of-disease-ecology-bes-parasites-pathogens-early-career-event-tickets-18530599522>). In the event early career researchers should develop a strong toolkit to go and make their mark on the future of disease ecology research, backed up by a network of peers and links to leaders within the field.

Participants will submit a brief abstract ahead of the event to present. Two invited speaker (Prof Sarah Reece, University of Edinburgh and Dr Kayla King, Oxford University) will share general feedback on abstracts and presentations, making this an ideal opportunity to "try out" abstract submission and get some practice ahead of conferences. Further, Prof. Sarah Reece and Dr. Kayla King, both leaders within disease ecology, will then present their experiences and career so far and where they see disease ecology heading in the near (and distant) future. This will open into an opportunity for the group to share and discuss their own ideas on the future of the field and where they fit in it, hopefully developing into potential future research questions. Day two will consist of a project management workshop, giving essential skills for running your own research projects at any career stage.

Our final event will take place at the BES Annual Meeting in Edinburgh and will bring together our SIG with the Quantitative Biology SIG for a brainstorming session. This informal 'after hours' pub-based session is designed to get our two SIGs thinking about joint actions and activities for the future.

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@ParasiteSIG

Special Interest Groups



Peatlands Group

From **Ian D. Rotherham**

2015 was an active year for the Peatlands group including major conferences and a series of expert workshops. Highlights were good cross-disciplinary exchanges throughout the group with a rich mix of academics and practitioners. Networking and partnership involved key stakeholders sharing ideas and good practice, nationally and internationally. We felt there was effective use of limited resources too to achieve maximum impacts. The group was involved in major conferences such as the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) – global conference in Manchester during August with a big BES Peatlands SIG presence, and the Molinia management and control event in Huddersfield in September. Other big events included the Moorlife Conference, and Taming the Flood at Crowle near Doncaster too.

The year's major activities were:

1) **Wild Thing 3-day International cross-disciplinary conference** 9–11 September 2015 based in Sheffield and the Peak District to examine future visions of landscapes and functions of peatlands and similar areas. This was with SYBRG,

IUFRO, BaLHRI, Sheffield Hallam University, JBA Consulting, ESEH, THMCF, Landscape Conservation Forum, Ancient Tree Forum, Woodland Trust, and Natural England. Sold out for the venue, it attracted around 180 people with an associated public keynote session very well attended. A highlight was the cross-disciplinary nature of the conference – with big international presence [about 20 countries represented]. There was excellent research and practitioner networking and impacts on national and international policy development too. The event provided the platform for future collaborations and events with cross-disciplinary approaches with sharing of ideas and good practice, nationally and internationally.

2) **Meeting the Bog Mosses:** We held workshops and field visits on 31 July, 10 August, and 18 September to Meet the Bog Mosses – engaging the public, the media and experts at Thorne Moors NNR & Lucas Moss, in the Peak District Eastern Moors. These were with SYBRG, IPS, THMCF, Eastern Moors Partnership, Moors for the Future, Sheffield Hallam

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University & JBA Consulting, Peak National Park and had around 130 participants. In November 2015, the team took the Sphagnum work to the public with the Peak Park's Science in the Park event reaching over a thousand people.

3) **Peatland Research Workshop and field visit:** On Monday 23 November 2015, the group held a joint peatland research workshop and field visit at Thorne Moors near Doncaster, and this was with SYBRG, IPS, THMCF, Sheffield Hallam University & JBA Consulting.

4) **The Annual Sphagnum Identification Workshops:** These have developed from events in previous years, and continue to grow in interest and reputation – including international delegates. This programme has increased from requests for training of postgraduates etc. and is now widening to include citizen science aspects and online guidance. There is an on-going need for basic taxonomic skills to underpin both site manager competences and to support research students in this field and the programme is developing into a positive citizen science package for hard-to-reach communities as well

as training for researchers and practitioners. It is the only such training currently available. An on-line guide to Sphagnum mosses is about to be launched.

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UK Peatland Research pages about to be launched on www.ukeconet.org

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Special Interest Groups

Plant Environmental Physiology Group

From Matt Davey

The Plant Environmental Physiology Group (PEPG) is one of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within the British Ecological Society and the Society for Experimental Biology.

Plant environmental physiology represents the study of short-term acclimation and long-term adaptation of plants to changing environmental conditions. The main secretary is Dr Matt Davey (mpd39@cam.ac.uk) liaising primarily with the BES, and Dr Colin Osborne (c.p.osborne@sheffield.ac.uk) within the SEB, both assisted by Prof. Howard Griffiths (hg230@cam.ac.uk).

PEPG NEWS:

Things to look out for in 2016...

International Workshop on Plant Environmental Physiology techniques 12 – 16 September 2016

Last year saw our second International Workshop on Plant Environmental Physiology techniques in Lisbon, Portugal. It was a huge success with nearly 100 people being involved

during the week. Due to the high global demand for places on this workshop we are going to repeat the workshop in September 2016 see the advert in this issue of the Bulletin – this is THE International workshop to attend if you study plant environmental physiology at any level. If you are interested in being involved in organising or sponsoring the workshop, or have any suggestions then please email either Dr. Steven Driever (steven.driever@wur.nl), Dr. Richard Webster (rcw@aber.ac.uk), Dr. Tracy Lawson (tlawson@essex.ac.uk) or Dr. Matt Davey (mpd39@cam.ac.uk), we are already well into the process of organising the 2016 event.

Annual PEPG Young Career Scientist Mini Symposium

We are planning on holding the next symposium Monday 25 – Wednesday 27 April 2016 at Hartington Hall hostel near Buxton, Peak District... join our email/social media for details!





Special Interest Groups

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Lucy Rowland – Postdoc rep lucy.rowland@ed.ac.uk.

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Jen Cuniff – Communications Officer – please contact Jen with news and events you would like advertising on our website, email list, Facebook page and Twitter @pepg_sig jennifer.j.cunniff@cabi.org.

Plant@BritishEcologicalSociety.org

[@PEPG_SIG](https://twitter.com/PEPG_SIG)

Special Interest Groups

Plant, Soils and Ecosystems Group

From Franciska de Vries, Sarah Pierce, Ellen Fry and Mike Whitfield.

Plants, Soils, Ecosystems is a BES Special Interest Group on plant-soil interactions, with a focus on biogeochemical cycling, community dynamics, and ecosystem functioning. Our aims include promoting research on plant-soil interactions and their role in ecosystems through workshops, symposia, and events at BES meetings, facilitating networking and collaboration among researchers involved in the study of plant-soil interactions and ecosystem ecology, and providing support for early-career researchers.

We currently have >250 subscribers to our email list, 826 followers on Twitter, and 882 likes on Facebook.

Activities in 2015

Journal club

We continued our successful online journal club in 2015. Despite only having had a couple of posts this year, we still have a loyal crowd of followers – generally our blog attracts between 250 and 800 views per month.



Sequencing meta-analysis workshop

In May 2015, we organised a very successful sequencing meta-analysis workshop in Manchester. This workshop brought together ecologists and bioinformaticians to work on a meta-analysis of sequencing data with the aim of exploring patterns in belowground biodiversity. During the two days of the workshop, and the 6 months after, some serious number crunching was done by all participants to merge >40 unique datasets with >1500 observations. Standardising these datasets, and particularly their metadata, was not an easy task. The work is still ongoing, and will hopefully be very influential in the field and result in a high-profile publication. But above all, this workshop truly brought together a diverse group of scientists in a collaborative project. Moreover, it has already resulted in new collaborations.

Special Interest Groups

Environmental change and forest fungi

This 2- day workshop was organised on behalf of Plants, Soils, Ecosystems at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London. On the 8th and 9th of October, 27 scientists from different research disciplines – including fungal ecologists and taxonomists, soil and forestry scientists, ecosystem and macro ecologists, bioinformatics experts and modellers – met together in this interdisciplinary event. We overviewed the state-of-the-art regarding research on ectomycorrhizal fungi. The 17 presentations included topics ranging from the impact of environmental factors on mycorrhizal diversity to host fungus specialization, large scale fungal distributions, forest biomonitoring and model development for belowground mycorrhizas. Discussions emphasised topics for future research, the use of emerging methodologies in fungal research and the need to link diversity to function in ectomycorrhizal communities.

@BESPlantSoilEco

Ecosystems and climate change mitigation

On 2-3 November 2015, Plants, Soils, Ecosystems and Climate Change Ecology jointly organised the conference ‘Ecosystems and climate change mitigation’ in CDH, London. With 50 delegates from academia, industry, and policy, this was truly a meeting bringing together scientists and practitioners to talk about the question of how ecosystems can mitigate climate change. There was a range of talks, from highly mechanistic work to practical examples of how to restore a peat bog. Discussions were fruitful, and there are plans to write an opinion paper based on the discussions during the conference.

President Elect Professor Sue Hartley gave the summarising presentation during the ‘Ecosystems and climate change mitigation’ conference, ending with a quote from Charles Darwin.

Special Interest Groups

Tropical Ecology Group

From **Lindsay Banin**

In April this year we joined forces with GTÖ (the European Society for Tropical Ecology) at their annual conference, hosted by ETH Zurich in Switzerland, and held an evening event for both BES and GTÖ members. The mixer, entitled *“The Earth Moves Faster at the Equator: a speed collaboration game for tropical ecologists”*, saw attendees form teams of people from different countries and different disciplinary interests to generate novel research ideas. The event culminated in each team ‘pitching’ their new idea to the rest of the group. The opportunity to meet new people was thoroughly enjoyed by the delegates.

TEG supported a special session at the Biennial Systematics Association at Oxford’s Natural History Museum in August on *“The value of long-term monitoring plots for plant systematic and ecology in the tropics”*, led by Tim Baker and Toby Pennington. Several competitive national and international scholarships were provided for students presenting in the session – one of the recipients, Maria Kaye, wrote a report on the event which you can find on our blog.



Special Interest Groups

Our 8th Annual Early Career Researcher Meeting was held at Stirling University in September. The meeting was run by PhD students Isabel Jones and Rebekah Mayhew, part of the T.E.A.C (Tropical Ecology And Conservation) group up in Stirling. The meeting theme was “*Tropical Ecology and Land-use Change*” with four focal sessions: function and value of secondary forests; current drivers of land-use change in tropical ecosystems; quantifying land-use change and; implications for biodiversity and ecosystem processes, each with a keynote speaker as well as a series of presentations from early-career researchers and chaired discussions. Feedback from delegates was very positive – researchers enjoyed both the high quality of the science discussed and the opportunities to network in a relaxed atmosphere, as well as the slick organisation by the local team. Next year we hope to open the demographic and welcome more mid-stage career researchers and academics to our annual

meeting as well as continuing to provide a friendly forum for early career researchers and first-time presenters.

We continue to keep TEG members up to date with news of events, opportunities and publications via our newsletter, twitter feed (@BES_Tropical, now followed by over 1000 tweeps), our Facebook page and our new blog, <https://tropecol.wordpress.com>). TEG members are encouraged to submit guest blog posts. In 2015, our team expanded to include Jake Snaddon (Southampton University) to coordinate our newsletter and blog communications.

2016 is set to be another exciting one for tropical ecologists in UK and Europe – we look forward to joint activities at the GTÖ meeting in Göttingen, Germany in February and the European ATBC meeting in Montpellier, France in June, as well as TEG’s own annual meeting.

Tropical@BritishEcologicalSociety.org

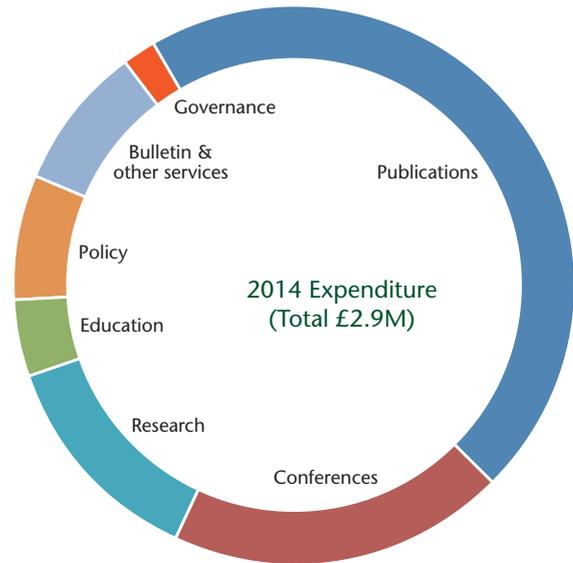
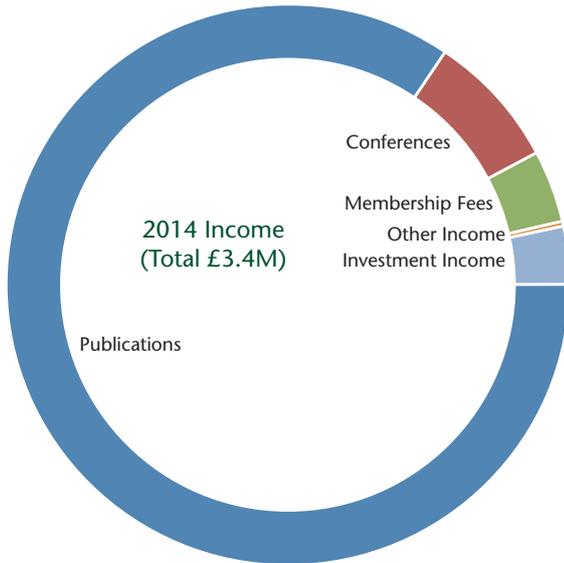
@BES_Tropical

Blog: <https://tropecol.wordpress.com>



Summary of Financial Information

In 2014 expenditure was significantly lower (£2.9M) than in the previous year (2013 = £3.8M) because of the expenditure on the centenary celebrations in 2013. Income in 2014 was £3.4M, again lower than in 2013 at £4.0M, because in the previous year there had been increased revenue from conferences, disposal of part of our holding in Charles Darwin House and a repayment of a loan from our trading subsidiary. Apart from centenary related activities, patterns of income and expenditure in 2014 are similar to 2013.



This is a summary of the information contained in the BES audited accounts for the period 1 January – 31 December 2014.



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