

ANNUAL REVIEW 2016-17

BRITISH
ECOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

STATEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to our 2016-2017 Annual Review! In my final year as President, I'm still impressed by the drive and dedication of the Society's staff and volunteers to deliver our mission of a world inspired, informed and influenced by ecology. Membership is core to our Society and we have had an incredibly successful year growing to 6,400 members – the highest number in our history – spread across 112 countries.

The science of ecology is at the heart of helping human society meet significant global challenges – our work in supporting and fostering ecology, and increasing its influence and impact, continues to be vital.

This report is just a snapshot of our achievements over the last 12 months. Our Liverpool Annual Meeting was a particular highlight, where we showcased 560 talks, 250 posters and 12 parallel sessions. Our 17 Special Interest Groups organise activities ranging from practical field based learning to conferences. Our travel grants enabled 14 student members from 10 countries to attend the 2017 INTECOL Congress.

We held an open call for journal Associate Editors, attracting 351 applicants from 48 countries, significantly increasing our editorial geographic diversity. For the first time

ever, we teamed up with Ecology and Evolution and the ESA journals to publish a cross-journal, cross-society Virtual Issue on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

We continue to build on our public engagement programme, through events we run and activities we support with our Outreach Grants. Our Policy team launched a new Policy Fellowship Scheme and continue to promote ecological evidence in Parliament. We have also supported the ecological community with a range of activities including a mid-career workshop and a reviewer mentoring scheme. In addition to external activities, we have been looking at ways to improve our effectiveness through a governance review.

I hope this review shows how we champion both the science of ecology and our members. Let us know your views on how we can continue to make an impact. As I come to the end of my time as President of the BES, I am really proud of what we have achieved together. I hope you'll be inspired to get involved and become the inspiration for next year's review!

S.E. Hartley
Professor Sue Hartley



6,400 MEMBERS



112 COUNTRIES

OUR VISION, MISSION AND MAJOR GOALS

We have a long and proud history of successfully supporting the academic ecological community and this remains core to our future. However, we also work hard to ensure that ecology has an impact across wider society through our work in policy, education and public engagement. This Annual Review showcases some of our achievements across all our key strategic goals in 2016-17.

Our vision is:

A world inspired, informed and influenced by ecology

Our mission is:

To generate, communicate and promote ecological knowledge and solutions

Our major goals are to:

- Generate, synthesise and exchange ecological knowledge
- Communicate world-leading ecological science
- Share the excitement and relevance of ecology
- Inspire, engage and recognise talent
- Build a sustainable, resilient and efficient BES

WE GENERATE, SYNTHESISE AND EXCHANGE ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

TRAVEL GRANT AWARDEES AT INTECOL 2017

The 12th International Congress of Ecology (INTECOL 2017) took place in Beijing in August this year. Having hosted INTECOL in London in 2013, we were keen to ensure our members were able to experience this international meeting. We provided travel grants for 14 student members from 10 countries around the world to attend the conference and organised a social event to enable awardees to meet each other and our President, Sue Hartley.



LAUNCHING THE BES POLICY FELLOWSHIP

We launched our new Policy Fellowship programme, offering mid-career ecologists the opportunity to develop their knowledge exchange skills by spending up to six months on a placement in the heart of government, applying their scientific expertise to a practical policy challenge. Our first Fellow, Deepa Senapathi of the University of Reading, was appointed in October and will be working within Defra's Environment Analysis Unit.



UK-INDIA INITIATIVE CONFERENCE

This was the second collaboration between our Agricultural Ecology Special Interest Group (led by Barbara Smith) and the Indian Society of Agroecology. Our event brought together researchers from the UK and India to share current work and identified priorities for research. The event was a great success, new collaborations were formed and delegates submitted a BBSRC application for a Global Challenges Research Hub. We hope the initiative will enable more joint research and develop the vibrant UK-India exchange.

www.agricultureecology.co.uk
@BES_AEG

DELIVERING WORKSHOPS NEAR AND FAR

The publications team ran five very successful workshops at universities, Special Interest Group meetings and international conferences – the busiest year to date! The workshops took place in Ireland, Wales, Mexico, USA and China and covered topics including how to get published, peer reviewing and search engine optimisation.



WE COMMUNICATE WORLD-LEADING ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE



BRINGING TOGETHER LEADING ECOLOGISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Our Annual Meeting in Liverpool brought together 1,200 ecologists from around the world to discuss the latest advances in ecological research and debate the future direction of their discipline. The meeting showcased 560 talks, 250 posters, 12 parallel sessions, 14 Thematic Topic Sessions, 4 plenary talks, 13 workshops delivered over three days celebration of ecology!

JOINT BES-ESA VIRTUAL ISSU

For the first time ever, the BES journals, Ecology and Evolution and the ESA journals teamed up to publish a cross-journal, cross-society Virtual Issue of papers dealing with Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The collection of 34 papers – and the joint endeavour – was very well received at the ESA's Annual Meeting and on social media.

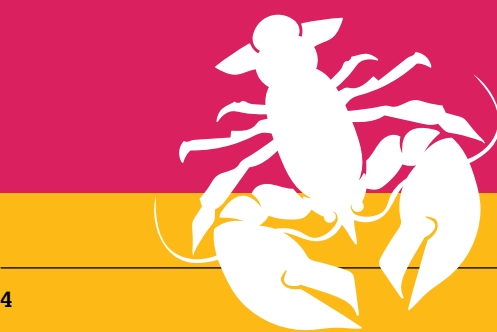


INVASIVE RHODODENDRON: JOURNAL OF APPLIED ECOLOGY

Scottish ecologists found that native plants need re-seeding after removal of invasive rhododendron. Working together with the James Hutton Institute, the University of Aberdeen and Scottish Natural Heritage, our press office issued a press release which was picked up by Scottish outlets such as the Scotsman and BBC Radio Scotland. One of the authors, Ruth Mitchell from the James Hutton Institute, was also interviewed live on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Wales.

MACROECOLOGY OF ALIEN SPECIES

To coincide with our second 2016 symposium, we organised a press background briefing with three of the speakers at the Science Media Centre in London to inform journalists about the drivers of invasions and their possible ecological impacts. Major UK media outlets such as the Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail and the BBC reported on this often contested issue and highlighted some of the troublesome species that the public should be looking out for.



WE SHARE THE EXCITEMENT AND RELEVANCE OF ECOLOGY



WHISPERING WHALES: FUNCTIONAL ECOLOGY

Newborn humpback whales whisper to their mothers to avoid killer whales or male humpback whales looking to mate, found researchers from Aarhus University and Murdoch University. Their paper was accompanied by a BES press release, which resulted in coverage in more than 330 outlets including BBC Radio 4, Swedish public radio, CBC, New York Post, China Daily, Buzzfeed, and the Smithsonian and Discover magazines. The authors supplied sound recordings which were also used in a number of regional and local radio programmes.



INTERNATIONAL COFFEE DAY

The societies of Charles Darwin House (including Biochemical Society, Royal Society of Biology and Society for Experimental Biology) came together to celebrate the science and future of coffee. We hosted an evening of talks and coffee cocktails followed by a one day interactive coffee exhibition from the growing of coffee, to the production of beans, their taste and the future use of coffee grounds in growing mushrooms and producing biofuels. Our “Bee-rista” activities considered pollination of coffee and other plants associated with our preferred coffee.



SCIENCE AND ART? HOW OUR OUTREACH GRANTS ARE REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

Each year we fund 12 Outreach Grants to promote ecological science to a wider audience. This year one of these grants funded Gestalt Arts and researchers from Cardiff University to create ‘Unsung Heroes of the Planet’, a science opera brought to Green Man festival-goers. Combining an opera, lecture, and walkabout performances, this reached over 13,000 festival goers and made national and local press, highlighting the impact these projects can have to raise the profile of ecology.

PROMOTING ECOLOGICAL EVIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT

We attended NERC’s flagship public engagement event ‘Into the Blue’ during October 2016 with a team of nine ecologists. Comprised of a mix of post docs and postgraduate students, the team entertained visitors to Manchester Airport’s Runway Park, reaching in excess of 20% of the 5,250 visitors recorded at the event.

Into the Blue provided members with the fantastic opportunity to engage visitors from in and around Manchester with ecology. Our activities proved to be a fantastic hit, with many citing the poo game (identifying animals from the shape of their faeces) as their favourite activity!

WE INSPIRE, ENGAGE AND RECOGNISE TALENT

UNDERGRADUATE SUMMER SCHOOL

In July, we delivered another successful BES Summer School – this time exploring the surroundings of Dale Fort, Wales. Those who attended included 50 undergraduates along with 10 A level students who represented Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities, and students who are the first in their family to consider higher education. The students were immersed in a jam-packed week of field ecology, careers sessions, networking and a day puffin spotting on Skomer Island. They were also joined by six PhD mentors who worked hard to support the students throughout the week and delivered a very successful social and mentoring programme.



OPEN CALL FOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Our journals ran an open call for Associate Editors and received a whopping 351 applicants from 48 countries. Over 70 new editorial board members from 21 countries have been appointed as a result – increasing the geographic diversity of the editorial team and bringing many researchers to the journals who have previously not been involved in our publications.



MID-CAREER GRANT WRITING RETREAT

In March this year, we delivered a mid-career grant writing retreat at Chicheley Hall, near Milton Keynes. The three day workshop was supported and facilitated by experienced speakers who have been successful in gaining funding, as well as representatives from funding bodies. Delegates were given insights into the best techniques for writing their first big grant application, with tips on topics such as building networks and planning around deadlines.



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WE ARE BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND EFFICIENT SOCIETY

SPONSORSHIP AND EXHIBITION AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The exhibition at our Annual Meeting continues to grow: 32 organisations took stands at Ecology Across Borders in Ghent this December. Those exhibitors included: publishers Wiley, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press; scientific instrument manufacturers from Cornwall and Bavaria and a software start-up from California. The exhibition provides extra income to help us deliver our mission and enriches the delegate experience. Stands are already on sale for #BES2018 at the Birmingham ICC 11-14 December 2018.

Contact paul@britishecologicalsociety.org for details.



IMPROVING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE BES

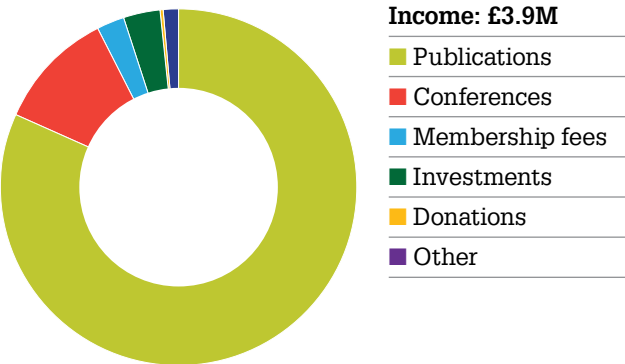
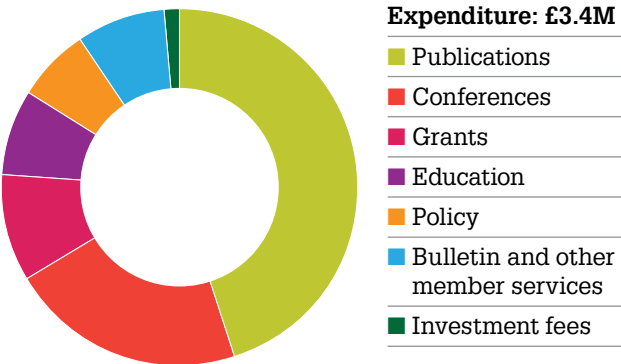
We have been looking at ways to improve our effectiveness through a governance review. The review has resulted in a proposed overhaul of our Articles of Association, composition of our Board of Trustees and the ways in which they work. These changes will help the BES be more effective and efficient whilst increasing opportunities for our members to contribute through the Society's Committees.



NEW PUBLISHING CONTRACT

We have renewed our publishing agreement with our long-standing publishing partner Wiley for a term of seven years. The contract not only ensures that our existing journals will continue to receive excellent support in their development from both parties, but will also allow us to explore new publishing initiatives together with an experienced, trusted and forward-looking partner.

IN 2016, £3.4 MILLION WAS SPENT FOSTERING ECOLOGY. HERE'S HOW WE SPENT THE MONEY...



Our members are at the core of all we do. They underpin and enable all our work, getting involved at all levels from delivering our public engagement and reviewing grant applications, to strategic development of our journals and helping the Society to widen its reach and inclusivity. The success of the BES is testament to their commitment and hard work. A special thank you to all our loyal members and all our staff, volunteers and trustees for their valued support.



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