



Publish!

Some decades ago the slogan “Publish or perish” was a constant warning for many scientific institutes and those working in them. In a real struggle for survival many institutes merged or disappeared while others successfully adapted. Nowadays the first part of this slogan remains: “Publish!” - but in some respects the scope has altered. All actions supporting the conservation or protection of mammals need to be firmly rooted in good science, as we have pointed out in earlier editorials (e.g. *Knowledge is the key to protection*, issue 49 (1)). This dictum holds for all types of study from occasional notes to long term studies, as well as those that fall between. So, “Publish”, for the sake of mammals, and for the sake of nature conservation.

Abstracts of papers published in *Lutra* from volume 43 (1) (2000) onwards are now available on the internet. Since last year the content of

papers can also be read and downloaded online. This new service from the Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals (VZZ) is attracting increased interest. In the first eight months since full texts became available on-line, electronic versions of the papers were viewed more than 5500 times. It has been interesting to analyse the frequency distribution of searches of papers made through this new medium (figure 1). Such statistics do not so much reflect the quality of the papers, but rather the interest of the reading public. These figures very clearly differ from the citation index: reflecting readership rather than scientific use in other papers. Clear patterns in the interest of visitors to www.vzz.nl/lutra/lutra.htm can be found: at present the paper *The wild-cat (Felis silvestris) nally recorded in the Netherlands* (Canters et al. 2005; issue 48 (2): 67-90) has been the most frequently requested (1370

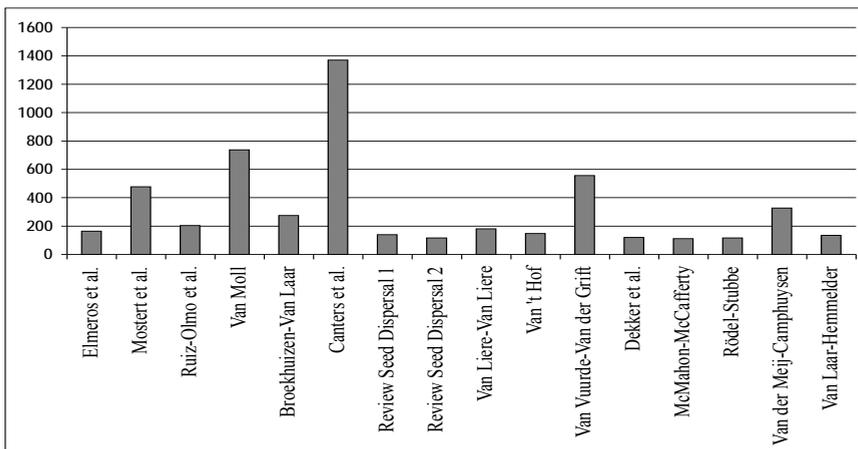


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of papers in *Lutra* volumes 48 (1), 48 (2) and 49 (1) viewed on www.vzz.nl.

times). This is probably the result of a press release by the VZZ office, something that we need to do more often when we have important statements about our native mammals that are of potential interest to the popular press. Runners up are Van Moll, Van Vuurde & Van der Grift and Mostert et al. with 737, 556 and 477 visits respectively. Even the least read articles have been viewed more than one hundred times.

If, however, the figures are corrected for time the papers were available online (as a relative frequency distribution), then *The distribution and diversity of whales and dolphins (Cetacea) in the southern North Sea: 1970-2005* (Van der Meij & Camphuysen 2006; issue 49 (1): 3-28) comes out as the most frequently requested paper (327 times; figure 2).

Many questions can be asked about this new cohort of electronic readers. “Who are they?” “How do they use the content?” “Which organisations (if any) are they affiliated to?” “What countries do they come from?” And so on. But the implications are clear: publish in *Lutra* these days and you will have a larger readership. And, as people come to use their computers more frequently to source material, and become more used to linking into, and between, the keywords in articles, they will find it easy to locate other papers with the same keywords. So authors: be warned of the possibility of overwhelming

numbers of readers enjoying the fruits of your intellectual labours, after publication your e-mail boxes may become overloaded! For those who prefer reading *Lutra* in the armchair near the fireplace, hard copy versions still remain.

This issue of *Lutra* includes studies from abiotic (and biotic) variations through to studies of translocations. Verbeylen rings the alarm-bell over the status of the common dormouse in Flanders (Belgium), which she suspects to be severely threatened. Its distribution is currently limited to the region of Voeren, connected to Limburg (The Netherlands) where the species is also threatened. Warwick et al. describe the destiny of hedgehogs translocated from the Hebrides to Mainland Scotland. The results may encourage further translocation experiments, and counter evidence from earlier, less successful, hedgehog translocations. Van Wieren et al. give a striking example of fluctuations among brown hare populations, and the relationship of this with climatic factors and the frequency of flooding of a salt marsh. The authors reveal the wide fluctuations of brown hare populations in a relatively hostile environment. Finally, Boshamer and Bekker describe a special observation of a serotine: a high altitude summer record of a bat-species that seems to be under-recorded in the south of Europe.

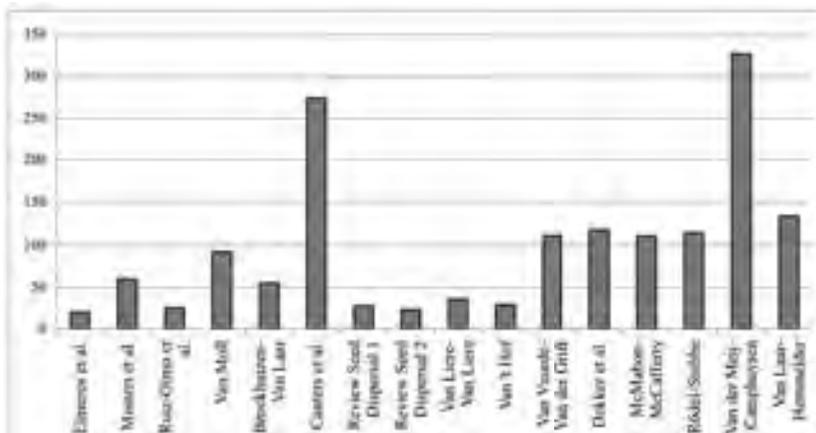


Figure 2. Relative frequency distribution of papers in *Lutra* volumes 48-1, 48-2 and 49-1 viewed on www.vzz.nl after correction for time available online.