

## EDITORIAL

### Our mission to transform conservation practice

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**SUMMARY: It is ten years since the launch of *Conservation Evidence*, and this edition begins with a review that examines the papers published in the journal and the authors that have contributed them. We take this opportunity to assess our progress, and reiterate the aims of the journal.**

Last year marked the tenth year of publication for the journal *Conservation Evidence*. To mark this Spooner *et al.* (2015) have reviewed our first decade of publication and described the trends and biases in the papers published. We have taken this anniversary and the review paper as an opportunity to evaluate our progress and consider the future.

We are delighted by our success in providing the opportunity for papers that assess the effectiveness of interventions to be published. Over the last decade we have published 246 papers from 609 authors, 72% of whom were conservation practitioners. The papers came from 35 countries, with the geographical spread of authors increasing over recent years, hopefully reflecting increased awareness of the journal. Perhaps paradoxically, we were pleased that 31% of the interventions that could be judged on success did not deliver the hoped for result; we believe that as much can be learnt from unsuccessful interventions as successful ones and are delighted that *Conservation Evidence* has become one of the major outlets for such results. We were also delighted by the findings in the review of open access by Fuller *et al.* (2014). Less than 4% of the 19,207 papers published by the main conservation journals were open access, but 26% of these were published in *Conservation Evidence*. *Conservation Evidence* topped the table of rankings for accessibility in major conservation science journals from 2000-2013, as our articles are free to both authors and readers.

The conclusion of our internal review was the importance of adhering to our mission and not drifting into becoming yet another academic conservation journal. Above all our aim is to provide practising conservationists with useful information about conservation interventions. It is our belief that the evidence about the effectiveness of many conservation interventions, including some which are long established, is inadequate. Unlike most journals we are therefore not motivated by the novelty of what we publish, but by its usefulness. Providing information about the study system and

site, as well as the cost in terms of time and resources, allows others to determine how relevant each result is to their own situation.

Our second belief is that we have an important role to play in providing practitioners with opportunities to publish their work. We aim to improve conservation outcomes by enabling conservationists to record, analyse and publish papers describing the effectiveness of their actions (including social and economic interventions), and encouraging reflection upon practice. We wish to encourage recording of the effectiveness of techniques as a much more routine aspect of conservation but understand that it is rarely the primary task of most practitioners to carry out and report on research. Therefore such recording will inevitably be limited by time and expertise. However, many of the published papers we consider most valuable are the result of relatively simple data gathering. Nor should potential contributors think that they need to carry out complex and sophisticated analyses of their data, or extensive background reading. Our mission is to make it straightforward for practitioners to collect and publish the methods they have used and the outcomes that resulted. We care deeply about knowing about the action carried out and the resulting consequences. We are less interested in extended discussions and long reference lists.

In the next decade we look forward to continuing to provide a service to global conservation practice and ensuring that positive actions can be repeated and less successful actions avoided. We believe that over the last decade *Conservation Evidence* has demonstrated the willingness of practitioners to put forward the results of their conservation interventions for others to read. In the face of ever-increasing challenges for conservation, the importance of making the right decisions based on the available evidence has never been greater.

## REFERENCES

- Fuller R.A., Lee J.R. & Watson J.E.M. (2014) Achieving open access to conservation science. *Conservation Biology*, **28**, 1550–1557.
- Spooner F., Smith R.K. & Sutherland W.J. (2015) Trends and biases in reported conservation interventions: summarising ten years of *Conservation Evidence*. *Conservation Evidence*, **12**, 2-7.

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