

The role of ‘Conservation Evidence’ in improving conservation management

William J. Sutherland¹, Roger Mitchell², Stephanie V. Prior¹

¹*Conservation Science Group, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, CB2 3EJ, UK;* ²*Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, 655a Christchurch Road, Boscombe, BH1 4AP*

Corresponding author e-mail: w.sutherland@zoo.cam.ac.uk

Effective global conservation will depend upon us learning from the experiences of those on the front line of conservation practice. In the chase for impact factors, many journals have moved away from what they often disparagingly refer to as ‘case studies’ and are looking for papers with greater generality. Interestingly, research shows there is very little relationship between impact factors and the usefulness of the research to conservation (Sutherland 2011). It is increasingly difficult to publish papers that simply test an intervention. We believe that conservation practice would be more effective in both cost and conservation outcome if evidence based interventions were used.

Conservation Evidence was launched in 2004 with the objective of filling the gap of determining effectiveness of interventions and in the last nine years has published 261 papers from 23 countries. We welcome original papers that examine the key conservation practices of habitat management (Robertson 2010), species management (de Clavijo 2010), invasive plants (Visser, Louw & Cuthbert 2010) and reintroductions (Ortiz-Catedral & Brunton 2010), but also are very pleased to receive papers that look at other approaches, such as changing attitudes and education (Balakrishnan 2010).

Our main criteria are that a paper has to have a detailed description of the actual intervention and a clear quantification of the consequences. We are very happy with simple, concise papers. There is no need for the introduction and discussion to include an extensive literature search or consideration of the broader issues. Our policy is to not charge for publication, yet also make it open access. This seems to be the essential combination to make such research exchangeable within the practitioner community.

We have changed many aspects of the journal at the start of 2012, including the management

structure. Roger Mitchell and William Sutherland are now Editors-in-Chief with Stephanie Prior as the Editorial Administrator. Our grateful thanks to Dave Showler, who has done a sterling job with the journal as Co-Editor until last year and generated an excellent series of papers. The website has been restructured so that it is much easier to use and with a better search function. We are delighted to have established an editorial board comprising:

Dr. Malcolm Ausden
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Prof. Trevor J.C. Beebee
School of Life Sciences, University of Sussex

Dr. David Bullock
National Trust

Dr. Mike Daniels
Head of Land & Science, John Muir Trust

Dr James Deutsch
Wildlife Conservation Society, New York

Dr. Lynn Dicks
Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge

Dr. Tony Whitten
Fauna and Flora International

Professor Richard Griffiths
Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent

We plan to expand this board, especially with conservation researchers and practitioners from outside the UK.

We have a number of exciting developments for 2012. During the year we will be launching two virtual volumes to coincide with the publication online and publication of the second synopsis in

the Conservation Evidence series, *Bird Conservation: Global evidence for the effects of interventions*. One will be on bird reintroductions and the other on habitat management for birds, collating the numerous Conservation Evidence papers on these topics. We are also excited by the proposal for a special issue on behaviour change compiled by Diogo Verissimo of the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, Canterbury.

We look forward to publishing many useful papers in 2012 and helping make a real difference in improving global conservation by the sharing of experience.

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Conservation Evidence is an open-access online journal devoted to publishing the evidence on the effectiveness of management interventions. The pdf is free to circulate or add to other websites. The other papers from Conservation Evidence are available from the website www.ConservationEvidence.com