

## SCB-ES Membership survey 2008 – results

### Europe Section members

The web-based survey started on 13 May 2008 and ended on 15 June 2008. The announcement was sent to the registered ES members. Ninety-six respondents filled in the questionnaire, of which 88 confirmed that s/he was the member of the Section, while the remaining 8 were not sure or were not members of the Section. Only 50% of the respondents were on the European listserv, while 31% of the respondents were even not aware of the existence of the European listserv. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated membership in other regional sections (The two largest: 12.5%: Asia, 11%: North-America). Twenty-three % of the respondents were member of the Section since its creation, while 74.1 % joined within the past 5 years.

Only 6 respondents work and live in different countries. Distribution of the respondents by countries of residence (note: 87 respondents answered this question):

Armenia	1
Australia	1
Austria	2
Belgium	3
Bulgaria	1
Channel Islands	1
Denmark	2
Finland	4
France	2
Germany	9
Ghana	1
Greece	1
Hungary	5
Israel	1
Italy	6
Japan	1
Mexico	2
Netherlands	2
Poland	1
Portugal	3
Slovenia	1
Spain	2
Sudan	1
Sweden	2
Switzerland	5
Turkey	4
UK	14
USA	6

Workplace: 53.6 % of the respondents works in universities/colleges, 10.7 % work for the government, 13 % for NGOs, 6 % in business/consulting and 15.5% are students Most (59.5 %) are involved primarily in research, 14.3 % both in research and education. Less than 10 % are involved in conservation planning, management and policy. The majority (78.2 %) published a paper in a peer-reviewed journal in the past two years.

Concerning the primary interest related to conservation biology, 63.2 % indicated “biodiversity loss”. Terrestrial ecosystems, vertebrates, landscape ecology, conservation planning and species protection are also among the most frequent interests (approx 50 % each). Policy, social science and education are the primary interests for approx. 30 % of the respondents. Other interests mentioned include invasive species, restoration, marine ecosystems, and genetics.

Regarding their contribution to nature conservation, a large number of the respondents will “very likely” publish in peer-reviewed conservation journals (75.8%) and conduct field work in species and habitat conservation (64.8 %). Fewer respondents (40-50 %) are involved in conservation consultation work and in conservation education, and even fewer indicated activities related to public awareness and conservation policy as a “very likely” contribution. Sixty-four % are member in a local, national or international ecological society, almost 30 % belong to an organization for the advancement of science and the same number belong to an ornithological association. Many are members of multiple groups related to conservation. Most of the respondents (51.2 %) belong to 1-2 organizations, 22 % belong to 3-4 and approx. 10 % belong to five or more organizations.

### **Why joined?**

It seems that the most important reasons to join the Society and the Section are the following:

- to “stay informed” in conservation issues globally and in the European context (71.8 - 72 % indicated this as ”very important”, respectively),
- receiving the flagship journal of conservation (47.8 %),
- to participate in SCB activities (34.8 %)
- to “translate science to policy” (25 %) and
- to be the member of the conservation community, developing contacts globally (38.9 %) and in Europe (45.6 %).

To live and work in Europe led to the evident choice to choose the European Section for 63.3%. The membership benefits (e.g. discounts on the SCB meetings, the journals except Conservation Biology) do not seem to play a very important role to attract new members according to the responses.

Most of the respondents (58.2%) met the Section first via SCB website and/or SCB meeting and/or SCB publication. Approx. 20% of them learnt about it at the 1<sup>st</sup> ECCB.

### **Satisfaction**

More than 50% of the respondents were “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the Section’s activities. However, 12.8 % was unsure and 18.1 % indicated that it is difficult to evaluate the Section apart from the Society.

“If you could change one thing about the Europe Section, what would it be?”: according to a large number of answers, the Section should improve its visibility in Europe and more active communication with the membership is needed. Other suggestions include the enhancement of policy activities and the active use of the listserv and the website for announcement, information exchange etc.

The strongest part of the Section’s work is its professionalism, its scientific basis and the ECCB itself. The weakest part is according to most of the answers is the visibility, the public outreach and the communication between members themselves and BODs and members (e.g. scientific discussions). Some respondents indicate that the Section is not represented well enough in the global SCB (e.g. in the journals’ editorial boards).

### **Europe-based EO**

Sixty-two% of the respondents think it would be important to establish a European EO.

### **Activities**

For the majority of the respondents, the organization of the ECCB is a very important activity of the Section (72.3%). Developing the science-policy-practice interface (e.g. contacts, communication) is also considered as a very important activity as well as initiating reviews on European conservation topics in the journal Conservation Biology (though it was also marked as “not really important” by 20% of the respondents). SCB meetings and summer schools are also a very important part of the Section’s work by 37.2 %.

Regarding future activities, becoming more involved in European policy conservation debates and developing contacts with the EU commission should be a high priority task (“definitely do this” by 68.4 % and 65.6 %, respectively). Dissemination of conservation best practices and the support of young conservationists are also important aims with 50+ % of the respondents supporting this by placing it in the “definitely do this” category. The improvement of communication between the Section’s members and the involvement of the members is also considered as a substantial task in the near future. The position of the Section in the global SCB should be also strengthened and contacts should be developed with other groups (scientific and advocacy groups) in the next 5 years.

### **Involvement**

Almost half of the respondents (44) vote very often in the Section elections, while 15% (14) never. On the contrary, 65% of the respondents says that she/he never volunteers for working in a committee of the Section. Nearly 80 % of the respondents very often or sometimes visit the global SCB website, while only approx. 42 % visit the Section’s website (very often or sometimes) and 38% not very often. The Section’s publications (e.g.resolutions) are read (very often or sometimes) by a bit more than the half of the respondents, while not very often or never by 42 %. Concerning the area of potential involvement of the members, education is the most preferred area (47.8%), while policy and communication are also equally attractive for members (~40% each). Other responses include research, data networking and best practices, but only 5 respondents are interested in fundraising.

The two main obstacles to the member’s involvement is the lack of time (65.2%) and the lack of information on the Section’s activities (43.5 %). Additional answers include "not being in Europe".

### **What do members expect from the Section?**

The most important service (76.4 % ticked) for the members is the dissemination of information required for the conservation activities. The web-based databases of jobs and educational resources also scored high (74.2%). Additional suggestions cover a wide range, from organizing more smaller meetings, summer schools, networking possibilities to directing funds to practitioners.

Regarding the website, the information on conservation-related events in Europe and on organizations, groups and network working in conservation in Europe was considered very

important by the highest number of respondents (78.3 %, 71.4 %, 67.4 %, respectively). Database of literature related to European biodiversity and ecosystems and the database on conservation jobs/traineeships and volunteering activities were also supported as an important content by more than 50% of the respondents, while considered as “not so important” by the 30-40 % of the respondents.

### **Renewal**

Ninety-three % of the respondents will renew her/his membership/subscriptions in both the global SCB and in the Section. One respondent from the “no renewal” group expressed that he/she doesn’t get particular benefit from the Section, while the others will not renew mainly because of carrier shift or moving out from Europe. The reasons for renewal are similar to the reasons of joining the Section: “staying informed about what is going on in conservation in Europe” and “interaction with European colleagues” are very important reasons for 78.8 and 46.4 %, respectively, while the discount on SCB meetings isn’t a primary reason for many. “Further helping the work of the Section” is also a significant reason for the renewals.