

SCB-ES survey 2008 – results
SCB members, residing in Europe, who are not Europe Section members

Membership

The web-based survey started on 13 May 2008 and ended on 15 June 2008. All-together forty-eight respondents of the total 360 (SCB members living in Europe but not members of the European Section) filled in the questionnaire (13.3%), though 2 of them were not sure if their memberships were current. The distribution of the respondents by countries can be seen below (less than 48 respondents answered this question). Only two respondents (both from the UK) work in countries other than their country of residence.

Albania	1
Austria	1
Belgium	2
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	2
Finland	2
France	2
Germany	5
Hungary	1
Italy	1
Malta	1
Poland	3
Portugal	1
Romania	2
Spain	1
Switzerland	1
UK	11

The membership survey email announcement went to those SCB members who are living in Europe but not members of the Section. However, according to the responses, 16.7 % indicated to be the member of the Europe Section. Surprisingly, 45.8 % of the respondents were not even aware of the existence of the European Section, and 81.3 % did not know about the European listserv at all. Seventy-nine (79.2) % of the respondents do not indicated membership in any other regional sections, while 7 respondents belong to the Afric , 4 to the North-American, 2 to the Austral and Neotropical America and 1 to the Australasia section. Ninety-two (91,9) percent joined the SCB within the past five years.

Workplace: currently 51.4 % of the respondents are employed by university/college while 20 % are students. Eight (8.6) % work for the government and approx. 9 % for NGOs. Most of the respondents (60 %) do research as the primary activity, while 11.4 % teach and 14.3 % do

both. Only 1-2 respondents are in conservation management/activism/planning or active in both research and advocacy.

Most significant primary conservation interests include biodiversity loss (for 76.3 % of the respondents), species protection (68.4%), conservation planning (60 %), vertebrates (42.1 %), terrestrial ecosystems (36.8 %). Less respondents indicated other areas such as: conservation education (31.6 %), invasive species (26.3 %), social sciences (26.3 %), landscape ecology (31.6 %).

Regarding their contribution to nature conservation, 77.5 % indicated publishing in peer-reviewed journals (and approx. 60 % has published in the last two years) and 66.7 % indicated field work as a “very likely” contribution. Preparation of conservation reports for governments, being involved in conservation education and raising awareness are also possible activities for most of the respondents. Fewer respondents indicated lobbying as a very likely or somewhat likely contribution (27.8 % and 33.7 %, resp.).

Sixty-five % of the respondents are the members of other ecological societies, 28.1 % belong to an association for the advancement of science, and approx. 20 % belong to an ornithological and a mammalogy association. Fifty percent belong to 1-2 NGOs, while more than 36 % belong to more than 3.

Additional comments described the interest and commitment in possible future involvement in SCB: “As a student I joined the SCB to gain access to job database and as an initial introduction to the conservation community. As my skills and experience develop I would hope to be able to become active in the society”; “If there are working groups related to policy, in particular international policy and governance, I am happy to contribute.” One comment also emphasized the need to increase the dominance of non-American influence in SCB.

Why join/not join?

Among the reasons of joining the global Society, the most important reasons are

- “to stay informed about what is going on in the conservation field” (67.4%: very important),
- to receive the Conservation Biology (43.2 %: very important)

- to develop contacts with other colleagues (51.1 %: very important).

Other significant reasons include “to translate science into policy” and to participate in SCB missions and activities. The possible discount on SCB meetings isn’t an important issue.

Why didn’t the respondents join the Section when registering as an SCB member? The majority of the respondents (59.1 %) didn’t know about the possibility to join the Section when registering, while 6 respondents (13.6 %) thought they joined the Section. Another 6 did not know how to join the Section. Only 3 (6.8%) said that they didn’t see if they could get any particular benefit from the Section. The rest indicated to leave Europe in the coming years or not to have been in Europe at the time of registering.

Satisfaction

The overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed they were not sure if they were satisfied with the Section’s work (28.3%) or: they couldn’t evaluate the Section separately from the global SCB (60.9 %). Only 3 respondents indicated to be “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the section’s work. Five respondents gave suggestions on what could be changed in the Section’s work including “to define its activities”, “to increase its membership” and to organize more meetings, discussions. The weakest part of the Section’s work was defined as the lack of its dominance in the global Society according to the one and only comment given.

Establishment of a Europe-based executive office

The importance of the establishment of a Europe-based executive office is ambiguous: approx. half of the respondents was not sure if it is necessary or not, while 46.8 % was supportive.

Activities

The current activities of the Section were regarded as “very important” or “somewhat important” for the majority of the respondents. For 71.7 %, developing contacts with policy and decision makers was considered as a very important activity, while organizing ECCB, “finding tools to improve communication between scientists and practitioners” were also very important for more than 60 % of the respondents. Other activities such as SCB workshops and summer schools, preparation and publication of resolutions, developing and initiating review articles on European conservation topics were also considered as very important activities for

approx. 50 %. “Developing contacts with the media” was the less supported activity by the respondents (39.1 % + 37% - very important or somewhat important while approx 20 % : not really important + not at all important).

Ranking the activities in the next five years: the most supported activities the Section should do were the following: “developing links with the EU commission and parliament to pursue European conservation issues” (72.3 % “definitely do this”), “disseminating best practice in conservation biology” (68.1 %), “becoming more involved in European conservation policy debates” (66 %), “supporting young conservationists through grants/awards” (63.8 %). Increasing membership in the Section and its visibility and the use of the expert database was less supported (38 % and 34 % “definitely should do this” respectively). Other suggestions stressed the importance to increase non-US influence in the global SCB (e.g. to ensure that a non-American will be an editor in the Conservation Biology).

Involvement

Expressing the possible areas of their involvement in the Section’s work, similar percent of the respondents showed interest in education, policy and communication activities (43.9 %, 41.5 %, 39 % respectively). Five respondents indicated fundraising as a possible area of activity, and additional responses included research, publishing and conservation work in Africa. The main obstacles to get involved in the Section’s work are the lack of information about the Section’s work (61%) and the lack of time (43.9 %). The financial requirements of the involvement are also a problem for 17 %. Considering the Section’s services, more than 80 % of the respondents would resort to the available Web-based resources such as jobs and educational programs and would expect help from the Section through its dissemination of information. The database of experts is also an important resource the Section could provide for 63.2 %.

Website

Approximately 70 % of the respondents are not even aware of the existence of the Section’s sub-page in the SCB website. 4 respondents (9.8 %) evaluated the sub-page as “good” and one as “excellent”. Among the ideas of new website features, the following were regarded by the majority of the responses as very important: Information about conservation- related events (87.2 %), list of European networks and groups related to conservation (84.6 % and 74.4 % resp.), database of conservation volunteering, traineeships and jobs within Europe (69.2 %), list of conservation research labs and entities (64.1 %), list of conservation literature

related to Europe biodiversity and ecosystems (64.1 %). Explanation of European organisations related to the environment was supported by 48 % as a very important new feature.

Renewal

Seventy-nine percent plan to renew the SCB membership. The most important reasons for the majority is to stay in contact with the colleagues (44.4 %: “very important reason”) and the journal subscriptions (40.6 %: “very important reason”). To work in a chapter/working group/section was not an important reason for 36-53 %. Getting discounts was also not an important reason for 53.1 %, while on the contrary, it was important for 18.8 %.