

Editorial

WEB ECOLOGY is leaving behind a troubled time and this year should mark its positioning in the safe side. Manuscripts are being submitted at increasing numbers, which make us see with optimism the journal's future. Most valued by authors are the rapid handling times, which from submission to publication typically may take 90 days but could be as little as 40 days. Also important is the open access policy of WEB ECOLOGY, which allows papers a wide diffusion. Tracking data from the Oikos web site provided some glad surprises. The first is how popular is our journal, as WEB ECOLOGY pages were amongst the most heavily downloaded in the whole web site (which includes several reputed ecology journals). Almost 75% of hits were from the US, some 15% from Europe and an outstanding proportion from China. Data showed that a paper published by WEB ECOLOGY was downloaded more than 3000 times, 8 papers more than 1000 times, and 24 more papers over 600 times. Most popular among recent papers were written by L. Luiselli (WE 6: 2–16), F. T. Maestre (WE 6: 75–87), and J. M. Rey-Benayas et al. (WE 7: 120–131). Papers published in early years of WEB ECOLOGY were and still are cited, particularly in conservation journals.

We understand that, in the current competitive environment, it is crucial to publish in high impact journals, as grants and jobs depend on it. Thus we will ask for coverage by Thomson Scientific, the publisher of the Science Citation Index, as the way to increase the appeal and secure a full development of WEB ECOLOGY.

Unlike the numerous new commercial journals, WEB ECOLOGY is issued by a non-profit institution, the European Ecological Federation (EEF), now in the process of being established as a charity in the UK. The EEF <<http://www.europeanecology.org>> objectives are to enable cooperation between European ecological societies in order to promote the science of ecology in Europe, providing a forum for effective communication of ecological scientists on matters of common interest, and disseminating ecological knowledge. The cooperation among ecological societies in Europe started in 1977, when a symposium in Norwich (UK) was supported by societies from other countries. After a number of years hosting symposia, it was decided to formalize the cooperation by establishing the European Federation with a Board and a Council, and statutes for these were drawn up with the main objective to have meetings (later to be called Congresses) which have now been held in a number of European countries – the next one due in Leipzig in September this year.

In line with its objectives, the main role of WEB ECOLOGY is to disseminate scientific ecological knowledge irrespective of the country of origin. It is supported by EEF member societies which cover production costs. It was decided, however, that as of January 2009 production costs will be passed on to authors, in conditions that are still to be decided.

To end up, we have an exciting future in front of WEB ECOLOGY, which should become a preferred outlet of ecological knowledge in a near future. For this, we ask your support.

Francisco Pugnaire