
Working Groups

Report on the activities of the SIL Working Group on Saline Lakes

At the recent SIL meeting in Finland, 17 papers were presented in two sessions, 'Inland Saline Waters: Biodiversity, conservation and management', chaired by Robert Jellison in my absence. Most of these papers have been submitted to the proceedings. The SIL group has no other activities apart from the triennial sessions associated with SIL meetings. However, most scientists interested in the field are associated with the 277-strong International Society for Salt Lake Research (ISSLR) which holds its own triennial symposia, the next to be this September in Perth, Australia. I also chair this group and Robert Jellison is its secretary-treasurer, so that there is good liaison between both entities and similar clientele. ISSLR maintains a website (www.isslr.org) which has six megabyte traffic daily. Besides current news items and a forum contributed by members, directory of members and salt lakes, it has regular literature updates to its extensive bibliography that is a very popular feature.

Our group realizes the danger of considering salt lake research apart from the rest of limnology and a group at the Finland meeting discussed the need to integrate or at least place our research in the broader limnological context. One particular aspect of concern is how plankton dynamics of saline lakes fit into the conceptual model fostered by the Plankton Ecology Group. The forum of SIL meetings in promoting integration of our speciality is invaluable. The recent launch of a new online journal 'Saline Systems' (www.salinesystems.org) edited by Shiladitya DasSarma and with an editorial board of many SIL members, brings together limnologists and bacteriologists interested in the extreme environments provided by saline waters.

We miss our founder, Bill Williams. To honour his life and work a special volume of *Hydrobiologia* will soon be published, focussing on Australian salt lakes and including many papers by SIL members.

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Aquatic Invasive Species: history and present activities

The SIL Working Group on Aquatic Invasive Species (WGAIS) was established in 1998 by the decision of the 27th SIL Congress. Initially the main goal of WGAIS was stated as "The working group could seek to develop an information system on invasive species on a worldwide basis. In addition, the working group shall provide an expert forum for development of strategies to combat further introductions". Detailed materials on the WGAIS activities are available at the working group web site (www.zin.ru/rbic/projects/sil_wgais/).

During 1999-2000, WGAIS under the chairpersonship of Dr. David Reid, focused on preparation of the international workshop, "Invasions of European and North American Ecosystems by Ponto-Caspian Species", which was held in association with the ASLO2000 Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark and was convened on June 2-3, 2000 at the H.C. Orsted Institute in Copenhagen. The purpose of this WGAIS activity was to bring together scientists from Europe and North America to discuss the recent predominance of successful Ponto-Caspian aquatic species invasions in the Laurentian Great Lakes and Baltic Sea, and to examine the potential for future scientific collaborations on research studies and information exchange (more information in the WGAIS 2000 Report at www.zin.ru/rbic/projects/sil_wgais/SIL2000Report).

In 2001, after the WGAIS chairmanship changed to Dr. Vadim Panov, WGAIS activities focused primarily on development of international cooperation on aquatic invasive species issues in geographic Europe because of limited available resources. During this period, the European Research Network on Aquatic Invasive Species (ERNAIS) was developed as a WGAIS initiative (www.zin.ru/rbic/projects/ernais/). Because of increased international activities on invasive species worldwide, a new perspective and goal were discussed and agreed upon at the last WGAIS meeting at the SIL XXIX Congress in Lahti in August 2004. The goal is "to facilitate development of interlinked subregional and regional thematic networks and information hubs of a Global Invasive Species Informational Network" (specifically contribute relevant information on freshwater and brackish water invasive species, including primary data for online GIS and species entries, publications, project descriptions, expert contacts, etc.).

Currently, WGAIS is developing a new concept for a regional information system linked to e-journal on aquatic invasive species, covering both inland and coastal waters, which can be effectively used for management purposes in different regions of the world over the long-term (www.zin.ru/rbic/projects/aquainvader/). Timely information incorporation into this system of geo-referenced data on invasive species records (for early warning functions), which usually are not published or published with significant delay, is considered by WGAIS to be a critical issue for fast publication of primary field survey/monitoring data in an electronic journal. The e-journal may have strong advantages in its ability to publish large technical reports, extensive primary datasets (usually not acceptable by international journals) and very short communications of records of species range extensions. The concept of an e-journal has been discussed already at several international meetings (please see - www.zin.ru/rbic/projects/ernais/ernais_journal.asp). This new specialized e-journal (tentative title "Aquatic Invasions" - The International Journal of Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Management) is planned as a formal SIL electronic publication in association with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Working Group on Ballast Water and Other Ship Vectors (currently chaired by Dr. Stephan Gollasch, e-mail: sgollasch@aol.com), with first online issue to be released by the end of 2005.

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