

Editorial

Conservation: A New Open Access Journal for Rapid Dissemination of the Transdisciplinary Dimensions of Biodiversity Conservation

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We are pleased to launch the new peer-reviewed open access journal, *Conservation*, published by MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute), which offers an exciting new opportunity to publish comprehensive reviews, original research articles, communications, case reports, letters, commentaries, and other perspectives related to the biological, sociological, ethical, economic, methodological, and other transdisciplinary dimensions of conservation. In addition, we are interested in explorations of the multiple linkages between human society and nature. *Conservation* is devoted to providing a global forum for practitioners and scholars to disseminate their research. We welcome submissions involving transdisciplinary approaches that advance conservation practices as well as scientific understanding of topical issues.

The idea behind *Conservation* was sparked by our crisis over nature conservation, and the earliest literature we found in this regard is a book by Myers (1979) [1] which raised concern over the extinction of species resulting from habitat destruction by humans, although we humans appreciated the variety of life forms (later referred to as biological diversity) at an earlier stage of human history. Coinciding with the emerging concerns surrounding nature conservation during the 1980s, the concept of biodiversity and conservation began to be discussed actively among scientists [2,3]. The term “biodiversity” appeared for the first time in the title of a publication by Edward O. Wilson, who presented results from the National Forum on Biodiversity [3]. During this same decade, Michael E. Soulé, considered as the grand architect of conservation biology, dynamized this discipline through a series of events and publications related to the conservation of biological diversity. In the early 1990s, international recognition of the importance of biological diversity and conservation increased. Since then, conservation biology has been recognized as a scientific discipline [4]. Notably, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), a broad and functional definition of biological diversity or biodiversity was reached and covers three main levels: diversity of species, genetic diversity, and diversity of ecosystems [4].

The convergence between the use of the concept of biodiversity and the declaration of conservation biology as a new scientific discipline led to a new configuration of studies related to the interaction, adaptation, emergence, and disappearance of species [4]. In March 2005, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment released its report highlighting the progressive and substantial loss of biodiversity globally, with 10%–30% of mammal, bird, and amphibian species threatened with extinction as a result of human activities. As the number of species threatened with extinction continues to rise, scientists are being asked to identify the factors causing species’ declines and to develop recommendations for

the management of their recovery. In this sense, most indicators of the state of biodiversity (e.g., covering species population trends, extinction risk, habitat extent/condition and community composition) are showing declines with no recent significant reductions in rate, whereas indicators of pressures on biodiversity (e.g., resource consumption, invasive alien species, nitrogen pollution, overexploitation, and climate change impacts) are increasing [5].

The growing concern over conservation issues in the past three decades sets the stage for a new open access journal to share the latest scientific studies on conservation. For example, a search in the Web of Science (period 1990–2020) using the keyword “conservation” as the subject shows a total of 382,441 articles published on this topic. The main research areas publishing on conservation topics are ecology (16.8%), environmental sciences (12.9%), biodiversity and conservation (9.8%), plant sciences (5.3%), and zoology (5%). The growing interest in conservation can be considered from the timeline of published papers, with Figure 1 showing a progressive increase in publications on this topic since 1990. Moreover, we can observe the increasing role of open access journals in the publication of conservation research (Figure 1).

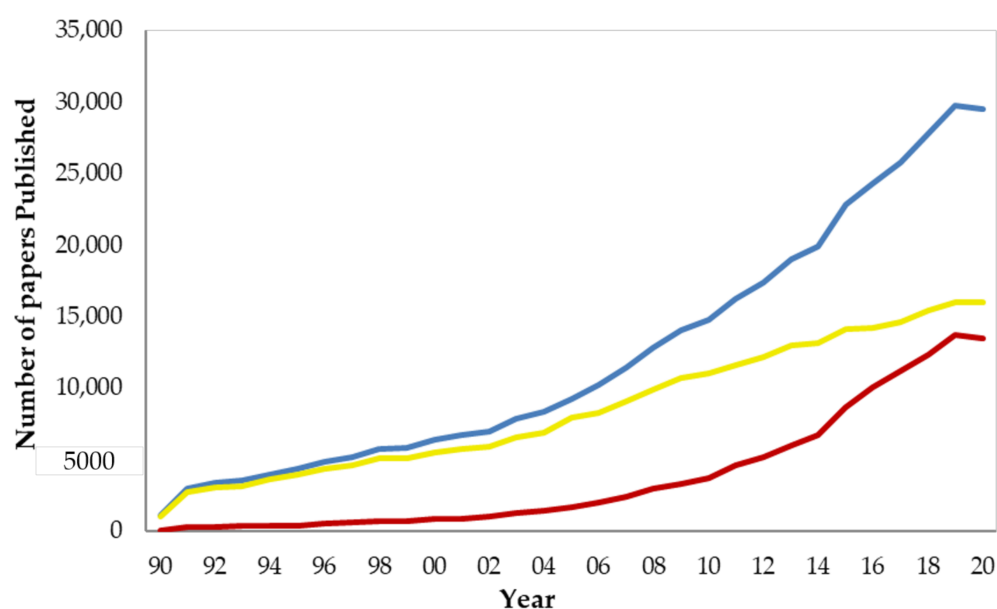


Figure 1. Trend of published articles between 1990 and 2020 including “conservation” as the subject area. Blue line: total articles; yellow line: non-open access articles; red line: open access articles. Source: Web of Science (accessed on 11 January 2021).

Conservation provides an advanced forum for studies on all aspects related to conservation issues, including biodiversity and environment conservation, resource recycling, conservation and sustainable management, conservation planning and governance, conservation ethics and ecology, creative and multidisciplinary solutions for conservation and restoration, as well as heritage conservation and restoration. In addition, we welcome submissions highlighting transdisciplinary advances in the science and practice of conservation, with application in management and policy decisions. Calls for Special Issues will address conservation-related issues from different angles. In the coming weeks, we will launch a call for submissions to the first Topical Collection “Frontiers in Global Biodiversity Conservation”, for which we encourage scientists working on biodiversity conservation to submit their manuscripts to this inaugural issue.

One main advantage of *Conservation* is the rapid yet rigorous peer review process, whereby all manuscripts are reviewed by two to four experts in the field (for further details, please refer to <https://www.mdpi.com/editorial>). The experience of other established

MDPI journals has shown that authors receive reviews and news of the first editorial decision within about two weeks, and if they are invited for revision, will be expected to promptly resubmit their manuscript. Following final acceptance, the paper will be published online in about three to four days. This reduces the time elapsed between manuscript submission and publication to four to six weeks without compromising standards of high quality. Moreover, authors are encouraged to publish the reviewers' comments and their responses together with their article in the interests of promoting a fully transparent publication process. In addition, reviewers who provide thoughtful, accurate, and timely reviews are recognized and rewarded with vouchers to be used toward publishing in *Conservation* or other MDPI journals.

We hope that the advantages of open access, high-quality standards, and rapid publication will encourage scientists and practitioners to choose *Conservation* as a venue to disseminate their research. We are looking forward to receiving your submissions to *Conservation*.

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Short Bio of Antoni Margalida



Dr. Antoni Margalida is currently a Leading Scientist at the Institute for Research in Game and Wildlife Research (IREC), Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)—University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM). He has also served as Associate Senior Researcher at the University of Bern (Institute of Ecology & Evolution, Division of Conservation Biology) since 2011. His research interests reside in understanding how spatial variation in human activities affects the population dynamics, behavior, and ecology of threatened vertebrates, with the goal of providing tools to managers and conservationists to optimize decisions and improve the conservation of threatened taxa. His current research focuses on ecological modeling, ecosystem services, and human–wildlife conflicts. He has published 173 SCI papers (Web of Science h-index = 36; Google Scholar h-index = 47), 7 books, and 64 book chapters across the areas of conservation biology, behavioral ecology, and human–wildlife interactions.

José L. Tella



Prof. José L. Tella obtained his PhD in 1996 and was granted a permanent research position in 2002 at the Estación Biológica de Doñana, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). His research covers a wide array of issues occurring at the interface between conservation biology and evolutionary ecology, where he attempts to answer both basic and applied questions through multidisciplinary research, combining long-term population monitoring based on marked individuals with experiments both in captive and field conditions and with laboratory and field work conducted in >20 countries. He is currently focused on four main lines of research: the adaptation of birds to novel environments (e.g., the introduction of exotic species and urban colonization), wildlife trade, the ecology and conservation of parrots, and the role of parrots as plant mutualists. His research has led to the production of >230 scientific publications and approximately 30 book chapters, which have collectively been cited over 11,500 times (Google Scholar h-index = 62).

**Luca Luiselli**

Prof. Luca Luiselli is President of the Institute for Development, Ecology, Conservation and Cooperation, Rome, Italy, and teaches Tropical Ecology at the University “Roma Tre”, Rome, Italy, and biostatistics and population biology at the University of Lomé, Togo. He is the Vice-Chair of the IUCN/SSC Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Specialist Group for Africa and is Visiting Professor at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He is a tropical community ecologist working primarily on the ecology and conservation of snakes and chelonians in Nigeria, Togo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Uganda, and Vietnam. His current research focuses on an interdisciplinary holistic approach for studying population dynamics, community structure, and species interactions in West African ecosystems; Ebola ecology; mammal communities and bushmeat trade; and rodent macroecology. His publications have been cited over 10,000 times (Google Scholar h-index = 47).

**Shuqing Zhao**

Dr. Shuqing Zhao is Associate Professor of Urban Ecology at the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences, Peking University. Her current research focuses on understanding the spatial and temporal dynamics, scaling, and organization of urbanization and their diverse ecological consequences. She has pioneered a conceptual framework to disentangle direct and indirect effects of urbanization on vegetation growth and applied it to major cities in China and the United States. She has also proposed the heat-and-threat balance (HATB) hypothesis for the urbanizational diversity gradient. Her research has provided insights into the interactions and feedback between urbanization and global environmental change. Her research has resulted in the production of >80 scientific publications (Google Scholar h-index = 37).