

Molluscan Research: trends of subject matter and statistics of papers published during 1994–2011

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Abstract

Trends of subject matter and statistics of papers published in *Molluscan Research* during 1994–2011 were analysed using data from *Zoological Record*. The number of papers increased after the frequency of publication was increased to three times per year in 2002. In addition to keeping a strong taxonomic focus with about a third of the papers describing at least one new species in the last ten years, it has successfully evolved from a primarily Australasian journal to a truly international journal with an Asia-Pacific focus.

Introduction

What is the scope of papers published *Molluscan Research*? Here we use controlled descriptors applied by *Zoological Record* to reveal the scope of subjects published in this journal from 1994 to 2011.

Methods, Results and Discussion

To analyze the subject focus of papers, we used the subject descriptors in *Zoological Record*, which has indexed *Molluscan Research* papers in its online database since 1994. It should be noted that some descriptors are not mutually exclusive and the same paper may be marked with multiple

descriptors. We examined data from four periods: 1) 1994–2001 when the journal was published annually and in print edition only; 2) 2002–2004 when the journal was published tri-annually in print and online by CSIRO Publishing; 3) 2005–2008, when the journal was published tri-annually in print and online by Magnolia Press; and 4) 2009–2011 which was published under the same conditions as those of 3), except with the joining of *The Society for the Study of Molluscan Diversity*. The data derived from *Zoological Record* are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. Only the top 10 descriptors are presented. Lower-ranked descriptors were of very small percentages, lower than, or close to, the statistically significant 5%.

TABLE 1. Top 10 subject descriptors for papers published in *Molluscan Research* during 1994–2011. Descriptors are those in *Zoological Record* and statistics are based on records indexed in *Zoological Record*. Ranking is based on the proportion of papers with the top 10 subject descriptors.

1994–2001		2002–2004		2005–2008		2009–2011	
Descriptors	% of 75	Descriptors	% of 45	Descriptors	% of 58	Descriptors	% of 51
New species	16.00	New species	37.78	New species	34.48	New species	27.45
Associations	8.00	New record	8.89	Phylogeny	13.79	Distribution	17.65
Growth	8.00	Phylogeny	8.89	Molecular genetics	10.35	Systematics	17.65
Growth rate	8.00	Size	8.89	General morphology	6.9	New record	15.69
Shell	8.00	Development	6.67	Morphological variation	6.9	Molecular genetics	7.84
Age class distribution	6.67	Embryo development	6.67	Introduction	5.17	Shell morphology	7.84
Age determination	6.67	Molecular genetics	6.67	New record	5.17	Climate & weather	5.88
Reproductive system	5.33	Radula	6.67	Nucleic acids	5.17	Climate change	5.88
Food plants	5.33	Systematics	6.67	Parental care	5.17	Distribution within habitat	5.88
Population density	5.33	Zoogeography	6.67	Associations	3.45	Feeding behaviour	5.88

Number of papers published

During 1994–2001 when the journal was published annually, 75 papers were published, with an average of 9.4 per year. In comparison, the average of papers per year was 15.0, 14.5 and 17.0 for 2002–2004, 2005–2008 and 2009–2011, respectively, when the frequency of publication was increased to three times per year.

Trends in subject descriptors

Molluscan Research is primarily a journal for describing new species, as this is the top descriptor for papers published during all periods examined (Table 1). The dominance of papers on new species is even more obvious in the last ten years when over one-third of the papers include the description of at least one new species. However, the papers do cover a great variety of subjects ranging from traditional areas such as systematics and morphology to relatively new areas such as molecular genetics (Table 1). It is interesting to note that a number of papers on climate change/weather appeared in the last three years (Table 1), probably reflecting the general trend of this awareness in biology and environmental sciences.

Geographic coverage

During 1994–2001, there was a very strong focus on Australia and New Zealand, but in the last ten years, South Pacific was the top geographic descriptor, accounting for nearly 30% of the papers (Table 2). Geographic coverage of papers generally expanded in recent years, with more papers on Asian Mollusca (especially Japan and China). After *The Society for the Study of Molluscan Diversity* became a partner, papers from Japan increased from 3.45% during 2005–2008 to 5.88% during 2009–2011 (zero during 1994–2004).

Conclusion

Molluscan Research is growing in a healthy direction, with an increased number and diversity of papers published. It has successfully evolved from a primarily Australasian journal to an international journal with a Asia-Pacific focus.

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TABLE 2. Top 10 descriptors for the geographic focus of papers published in *Molluscan Research* during 1994–2011. Descriptors are those in *Zoological Record* and statistics are based on records indexed in *Zoological Record*. Ranking is based on the proportion of papers with the top 10 geographic descriptors.

1994–2001		2002–2004		2005–2008		2009–2011	
Descriptors	% of 75	Descriptors	% of 45	Descriptors	% of 58	Descriptors	% of 51
Australia	29.33	South Pacific	33.33	South Pacific	22.41	South Pacific	33.33
West Pacific	26.67	New South Wales	11.11	North Pacific	12.07	North Pacific	15.69
South Pacific	21.33	New Zealand	11.11	New Zealand	8.62	New Zealand	9.80
South East Indian Ocean	18.67	South Indian Ocean	11.11	South Indian Ocean	8.62	Japan	5.88
New Zealand	17.33	Australia	8.89	New South Wales	8.62	South Indian Ocean	5.88
New Zealand Marine	12.00	Australia Queensland	8.89	Indonesia	6.9	Arabian Sea	3.92
New South Wales	9.33	Indian Ocean	8.89	North Indian Ocean	5.17	Australia Queensland	3.92
Australia Queensland	5.33	North Pacific	8.89	Japan	3.45	China	3.92
South Australia	5.33	West Pacific	8.89	New Caledonia	3.45	North Indian Ocean	3.92
South Australia Marine	5.33	Western Australia	6.67	Norfolk Island	3.45	Yunnan China	3.92