



## EDITORIAL

# Expanding horizons and widening participation in Insect Conservation and Diversity

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The world is changing rapidly, due, in large part, to the activities of humans driving massive changes in the environment at both local (Wenzel *et al.*, 2006) and global (Rosenzweig *et al.*, 2008) scales. These changes have inevitably resulted in increased rates of population decline and species extinction among many invertebrate taxa (Thomas *et al.*, 2004; Fonseca, 2009). Because of their large size and aesthetic appeal butterflies, in particular, have been the subject of numerous studies investigating extinction risk and potential mitigation strategies (e.g. Soga & Koike, 2013; Lawson *et al.*, 2014). For example, colonisation of the butterfly *Hesperia comma* into new areas was greatly increased if those areas were actively managed as protected areas (Lawson *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, the importance of habitat availability and specific host and habitat needs of insects at their range edges is becoming recognised (Oliver *et al.*, 2009). Our latest Virtual Issue, dealing with butterfly conservation provides an excellent overview of the problems faced by this charismatic group.

Fortunately, it is not all bad news from the world of butterfly conservation. It is encouraging to see for instance, in this issue, the paper by Lindman *et al.* (2015) who address these concerns using a generalist endangered butterfly species, *Lycaena dispar*, to investigate host plant preferences and habitat preferences at the margins of its geographic range. Using a combination of laboratory and field studies in Estonia, they were able to demonstrate that although at its northern distribution limit, its ability to use a range of host plants and habitats mean that active conservation measures are not required in this part of its range, despite it being endangered elsewhere in Europe due to habitat loss, agricultural intensification and climate change (Asher *et al.*, 2001).

The success of *L. dispar* in parts of its range due to high host and habitat flexibility, can, without stretching the analogy too far reflect the success of *Insect Conservation & Diversity* itself, now entering its eighth year and negotiating a changing publishing landscape in flux from the activities of open-access journals (Björk *et al.*, 2010), while making inroads into a target conservation and biodiversity niche traditionally dominated by more vertebrate-focused journals such as *Animal Conservation* or

*Biological Conservation*. Since the launch of *Insect Conservation & Diversity* in 2008 (Leather *et al.*, 2008), our geographical range has expanded from 17 different countries in 2008 to 38 countries in 2014 (based on addresses of submitting authors). We have increased our number of issues from four per year to six, and in 2014 published papers dealing with insects from habitats as far removed as the sub-Antarctic (Haupt *et al.*, 2014) and Sweden (Koch *et al.*, 2014). Although beetles, wasps and butterflies feature prominently in our pages, as benefits their high relative diversity, understudied groups such as the Plecoptera remain highly sought-after (Bojkková *et al.*, 2014).

To reflect our expanding research and taxonomic areas, we have made some strategic additions to the editorial board of *Insect Conservation & Diversity* in 2014, and welcome six new associate editors to the team: Peter Batáry from Germany to bolster our agro-ecology expertise, Tom Bolger from Ireland specializing in soil biodiversity, Chris Buddle from Canada to lead our continuing interest in important arthropod relatives of insects, including spiders and related taxa, Heloise Gibb from Australia specializing in restoration ecology, fire and ants, Mats Jonsell from Sweden specializing in saproxylic insects and Jörg Müller from Germany adding greatly to our expertise in forest entomology. On a sadder note we say goodbye to Rob Ewers who has served the journal exceptionally well since its inception.

To reiterate our message from 2013 (Didham *et al.*, 2013), we particularly welcome long-term field studies using both observational and manipulative approaches, but we rarely publish laboratory studies. Although our primary remit is entomological, we are also receptive to papers dealing with arachnids. We have no bars when it comes to habitat or geographical location, and welcome studies based in the urban environment. We would also draw your attention to a previous editorial (Leather *et al.*, 2014) in which we give specific advice on a range of problems and pitfalls to avoid in developing your manuscripts in these fields.

We look forward to receiving your submissions over the coming year.

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