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.....Reprints as a Neglected Resource.....

DANIEL PAULY
ICLARM

The various information services available to scientists have in common one disagreeable feature—they cost money. This article, on the other hand, discusses one of few things left in this world that are free—the scientific reprint. Most readers will know this, but just in case, I shall briefly explain the reprint "resource system."

Once an article has been accepted for publication in a scientific journal, the author generally receives a letter or card with information on the number of free reprints, if any, and the cost of additional copies available from the journal's publishers.

Upon receipt of their reprints, authors generally send some to colleagues who didn't ask for them (and if it is a "first", to parents and friends also!). The rest are kept to fulfill "reprint requests".

These requests emanate from (i) colleagues who read the article in the journal in which it was published or (ii) colleagues who consulted one of the several current-awareness journals, e.g., *Current Contents, Biological Abstracts* or *Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts*, which contain, in addition to the title of the article, and sometimes the abstract, the address of the senior author.

One of the main purposes of these "secondary" journals, it must be stressed, is to enable people to send reprint requests.

Thus, a system exists which, in principle, allows the enterprising librarian or individual scientist to acquire, for the cost of the necessary stamps, a selection of recent articles on any subject of interest, and to keep abreast of a given field without having to purchase whole runs of expensive journals. The system works because it is fuelled essentially by authors' vanity.

Who Requests Reprints?

I have been keeping reprint requests received in recent years for the very purpose of doing the kind of analysis I am now presenting, to assess how this resource system works in real life, particularly in developing countries. The analysis concerns 30 articles and reports for which 465 written requests were received by the end of 1981, from 63 countries.

Most (170) of the requests stemmed from the U.S.A., followed by Canada (48), the United Kingdom (29), Japan (16), Australia (15) and Sweden (10). The developing countries with most requests were India (9), Venezuela (7), Mexico, Thailand and the Ivory Coast (6).

However, when grouped by areas and adjusted for numbers of marine scientists in each area (see Table 1), a strange picture emerges. Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, PNG and the South Pacific Islands) generated the highest number of requests per scientist, followed by Africa, with the U.S.A. and Canada third. This was caused by the large number of requests from FAO field officers and French expatriate scientists working in Africa, and in Oceania, personal contacts with Australian scientists and expatriate (mainly European) scientists in Papua New Guinea.

Grouping the reprint requests and number of scientists further into "developed" and "developing" countries produced the surprising result that requests from developing countries per scientist were only slightly fewer than from developed countries. However, it was evident when analyzing the requests that many stemmed not from national scientists, but from bilateral or international projects or from expatriate scientists under national contracts as in Africa and Oceania.

The question remains as to why national scientists from developing countries write less reprint requests than their counterparts from or in developed countries.

Language is not the problem, since only one of the 30 items was written in a language other than English. Nor, one would think, is it because the papers are irrelevant to the tropics, since most of them are explicitly tropical in title and content, and a number were published in tropical countries.

The problem indeed seems to be at the other end. While teaching fisheries courses

Relationship of reprint requests to number of marine scientists

Area	# reprint requests	# marine scientists[a]	# requests • 100 / # scientists
Africa	25	450	5.56
Asia	54	3,300	1.64
Americas (excl. U.S.A. and Canada)	26	1,000	2.60
U.S.A. and Canada	218	4,600	4.74
Europe	108	3,700	2.92
Oceania	34	450	7.56
Developed countries	359	10,000	3.59
Developing countries	106	3,500	3.03
World	465	13,500	3.44

[a]As compiled by Linda Temprosa, ICLARM Librarian, from several directories of scientists.

in Kenya, Thailand and the Philippines (the first two courses involving students from a large number of countries in Africa and Asia), I noticed that there is very little awareness, not only of the role of reprints in scientific research, but also of the current awareness journals themselves.

Their absence from the libraries of the various institutes is often attributed to their high cost relative to primary literature journals. *Current Contents* (Life Sciences) costs US$270 per year (52 issues), while *Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts* costs $736 per year (12 issues), against $15 to 150 for an annual subscription to a scientific journal.

On the other hand, it is also true that most scientific journals devoted to fisheries and aquaculture are crammed with articles that have no relevance to tropical, developing countries, for which reason libraries generally will save a lot by purchasing only a few "core" journals and acquiring, by reprint requests, selected articles published in more peripheral journals. For the individual scientists in developing countries, even the cost of the necessary stamps is not negligible when one receives a monthly salary of about $100, as is often the case throughout Southeast Asia.

Two other situations which tend to limit exchange of reprints are:

- –not enough developing-country scientists "play the game" because they cannot afford to purchase reprints of their paper and/or do not respond to reprint requests.
- –journals (both primary and current awareness) sent by surface mail tend to arrive so late that reprint requests from them may arrive when the author's supply of reprints has dried up. It often takes 5-6 months for surface mail from Europe to reach us in the Philippines.

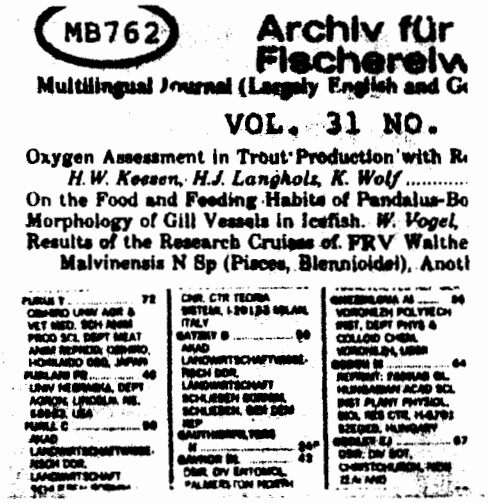
The main reason, however, why this reprint exchange doesn't really work in developing countries is probably that many colleagues don't know about the reprint system; their teachers in University didn't mention it, and nobody else ever mentioned it explicitly.

Thus: write to a colleague and ask for a reprint! (reprints of this article are available by the way). A

17928-1Q11 Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. Index, 1953-1976. Volumes 82-105 [indexes sub author and species indexes]. Beckman,W.C. (comp.) American Fisheries Society, Bethesda, MD (USA). 1980. p. En.
The index of the transaction of the American Fisheries Society is presented for the period 1953-1976.

17921-1Q11 The 1977-78 purse-seine skipjack fishery New Zealand waters. Habib,G.; Clement,I.T.; Fisher,K., Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Wellington (New Zealand). Fisheries Research Div. 1980. 42 p. *Occas. Pu Fish. Res. Div. Minist. Agric. Fish. (N. Z.), (no. 25) ISS. 0110-1765.* En;en.
Information includes catch-per-effort of the commercial

Current awareness journals—what you get: ASFA's typeset format *above*; photoreduced journal contents pages in Current Contents, *right*, and its address list of authors, *below*.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VOL. 31 NO.
Oxygen Assessment in Trout Production with R
H.W. Kessen, H.J. Langholz, K. Wolf
On the Food and Feeding Habits of Pandalus-Bo
Morphology of Gill Vessels in Icefish. W. Vogel,
Results of the Research Cruises of FRV Walthe
Malvinensis N Sp (Pisces, Blennioidei), Anot

How to order a reprint

- Scan the recent literature for titles that interest you.
- Write the full reference of the article of interest on to a reprint-request card (sample below).
- Complete reprint-request card legibly, with your name and institutional address, and with address of author (in "Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts," the address is given under the title; in "Current Contents," the authors' addresses are at the back of each issue).
- Send airmail.
- If you need the paper desperately, or if you don't get the reprint in response to your card, send a letter explaining to the author why you need the paper. This will help.
- Don't ask for the reprint you want *plus* "any related papers." This could mean the life's work of some authors, which they certainly are not going to send you.
- Don't ask for several copies of the same reprint. If you need several copies, better explain in a letter.
- Don't send reprint requests for papers published 4-5 years earlier. Authors probably won't have reprints and might not even bother to send you a photocopy.

ICLARM
Postal address: ICLARM, MCC P.O. Box 1501,
Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines

Dr. A D Pongase
Fisheries Department
Research Division
Harbour Road B
Saturnia City
Saturnia/00100

AIR MAIL

_____ your address

_____ author's (recipient) address

_____ better use airmail

your detailed address _____

date _____

complete reference of requested paper _____

your name and signature _____

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LIVING AQUATIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
Postal address: ICLARM, MCC P.O. Box 1501,
Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines
Phone 818 0466/818 0283 Telex ITT 40668 ICLARM PM
17th Floor Merrobank Plaza, Buendia Ave. Ext., Makati
Metro Manila, Philippines

Manila, Apr. 1 1982

Dear Dr. Pongase,
I would greatly appreciate receiving a reprint of your paper(s) entitled:

The Biology and Exploitation of Punichthys hilarius on the Saturnian shelf.

which appeared in Trans. Saturn. Phil. Soc. 67:1-12
Thank you for this courtesy. Sincerely yours,
Daniel Pauly