



## International Union for the Study of Social Insects

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Greetings from warm Stellenbosch (South Africa) where they insist on placing fake snow on Christmas trees.... It remains strange to celebrate Christmas in summer, although it has been 14 years since I left the northern hemisphere. I maintain that Christmas should be in winter (and I would be very happy to do without Christmas then!).

Anyway, this newsletter is not about Christmas, but to convey information. In this newsletter I will share with you Mike Breed's annual newsletter as Editor-in-Chief as well information different sections have sent me.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and all the best for 2016.

*Madeleine Beekman*

Editor's Annual Report for 2015. Prepared by Mike Breed.

*Insectes Sociaux*, the publication of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects, published its 62<sup>nd</sup> annual volume in 2015. 64 articles, spanning 524 pages, were published in volume 62. The journal represents the collective effort of a large community of authors, reviewers and editors, as well as the production and business expertise of our publishing partner, Springer. Any account of the journal's successes must start with an acknowledgement of the massive amount of work done by the IUSSI community in support of the journal.

The most significant change for the journal since the last report was the retirement of Johan Billen from the Editor in Chief position. Johan served the journal with excellence, dedication, and precision for 24 years, and the IUSSI owes him a deep debt of gratitude for his efforts in maintaining the high editorial standards of the journal while shepherding it through the rapidly changing scientific publishing landscape.

Michael Breed has succeeded Johan as Editor in Chief, with a term that carries to the next IUSSI Congress, to be held in Brazil in 2018. Miriam Richards and Yves Roisin remain with the journal as Associate Editors. Margaret Couvillon has joined the editorial team as the Reviews Editor and Marianne Peso started in February 2015 in the new position of Social Media Editor. The journal also has a strong editorial board comprised of 18 scientists drawn from the global IUSSI community.

### **Number of pages and papers published, page budget**

Our contract with Springer calls for publication of 500 pages annually, a figure commonly called the page budget. Volume 62 had 524 pages, in contrast with Volume 61 at 406 pages, Volume 60 at 542, volume 59 at 600, and volume 58 at 585. The number of articles published has increased in importance and our goal is to re-attain the 600 page per volume level, representing an average of 64 articles published per volume. Quality, of course, is highly important and implicit in this statement is that the editors retain or improve the quality of the papers published while reaching the page/article budget.

### **Manuscript flow, acceptance rates, and publication times**

In 2014 the journal had 126 submissions. To date (Oct 21) there have been 116 submissions in 2015, a figure that puts the journal on track to receive somewhat more submissions this year than last.

Perhaps the most important change made in handling of papers by the journal has been to shorten the deadline for return of revised manuscripts by authors from 180 days to 60 days. This change has greatly improved the rate of the journal's workflow. The editorial team works to move manuscripts through the editorial pipeline as rapidly as possible. Common causes of delays are these circumstances: 1. Potential reviewers are slow to respond to review requests and then decline the invitation, 2. Reviewers are slow to submit a review

after agreeing to take the assignment, and 3. Authors are slow to return revisions. At times editors are engaged in fieldwork or have other professional responsibilities that delay their responses.

Nearly all of the manuscripts currently (as of Oct 21 2015) with editors for action (inviting reviewers, making accept/revise/decline decisions) were submitted in August, September or October of 2015, suggesting that most manuscripts are moving through the system without inordinate delays. Nonetheless this is always an area in which we can do better and there is considerable competition among journals to have short handling times, a pressure to which we need to continue to respond.

Of the 94 papers submitted for which final decisions have been made since the transition from Johan to myself as Editor in Chief in Aug 2014, 52 were rejected, 38 accepted and four were withdrawn. Additionally, as of Oct 21 2015, 13 submissions are back to authors for revision and 39 are with editors, most of which are awaiting responses from reviewers. Roughly 5 percent of submissions are rejected without review, most of these because the content of the submission was not within the scope of the journal.

### **Impact factor**

Our impact factor (based on ISI-Web of Science reports) hit a high point in 2011 and has fallen to slightly above 1.0 for 2014. This is a disappointing outcome and is clearly a point on which we need to strive to do better. Part of this, of course, is to publish more impactful papers but also we need to increase awareness in the IUSSI community that appropriate citation of *Insectes Sociaux* papers helps the journal and by extension the IUSSI. Our five-year impact factor for 2014 ranks us 33<sup>rd</sup> among entomology journals, although our total cites for the year give us a more respectable ranking of 21<sup>st</sup>. On a positive note, while we rank only 53<sup>rd</sup> in terms of the articles printed for 2014 the ratio of total cites per article published is quite high, among the best in the entomology subject area.

Whatever your opinion is about the current obsession with journal citation records in evaluating CV's in job hires and in promotion evaluations (this is true at least in the US, where I have seen this play out) the fact is that the low impact factor damages our ability to attract the highest quality submissions.

We should help our younger colleagues to understand that they can build their H-index with well-cited papers regardless of the journal in which they are published, and that citations often times (sadly) depend on the author's ability to self-promote their work. As an editorial team we are trying to help, with our social media efforts, to give work published in *Insectes Sociaux* more visibility.

As a reminder, the impact factor for 2014 was calculated by ISI as the average number of times papers published in *Insectes Sociaux* in 2012 and 2013 were cited in 2014. Thus the index lags behind changes made by the journal; another way of saying this is that if we make

changes to promote citations of volume 63 (2016) these will not affect our impact factor until the 2017 impact factor is calculated in early 2018.

| Year | Volume | Total Cites | Impact | 5-Year | Immediacy | Articles |
|------|--------|-------------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|
|      |        |             | Factor | Impact | Index     |          |
| 2014 | 61     | 2374        | 1.022  | 1.31   | 0.378     | 45       |
| 2013 | 60     | 2166        | 1.312  | 1.525  | 0.3       | 60       |
| 2012 | 59     | 2098        | 1.331  | 1.511  | 0.373     | 75       |
| 2011 | 58     | 2193        | 1.696  | 1.63   | 0.377     | 69       |
| 2010 | 57     | 2022        | 1.425  | 1.581  | 0.241     | 58       |

## Social media efforts

We have put major effort, under the leadership of Marianne Peso, to make *Insectes Sociaux* a part of the social media conversation. These include a facebook page, which has accumulated over 500 “likes”, a twitter feed, and a blog. All of these media are used to promote awareness of journal content. It takes a while to build momentum in social media, but we have a satisfying number of views of the blog and good response to our facebook posts (the table below shows our facebook post reach).

■ Reach: Organic / Paid 
■ Post Clicks
 ■ Likes, Comm

| Published              | Post  | Type | Targeting | Reach | Engagement |
|------------------------|---|------|-----------|-------|------------|
| 09/20/2015<br>7:54 pm  | Hi everyone. We have a new feature up on the blog: "Interview with..."  | 🔗    | 🌐         | 116   | 4<br>6     |
| 09/05/2015<br>1:59 pm  | The editors of <i>Insectes Sociaux</i> thank all the reviewers who contributed to the journal.  | 🔗    | 🌐         | 61    | 3<br>0     |
| 09/02/2015<br>9:59 pm  | Check out this article: <a href="http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s000...">http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s000...</a> | 🔗    | 🌐         | 69    | 2<br>0     |
| 08/19/2015<br>8:08 pm  | Hi everyone. New blog post up detailing how to get to know an ant.  | 🔗    | 🌐         | 605   | 34<br>25   |
| 08/13/2015<br>11:07 pm | In an ant species with queen, worker and soldier castes ( <i>C. bomb...</i> )   | 🔗    | 🌐         | 518   | 41<br>11   |
| 08/06/2015<br>3:28 am  | Be(e) careful when anaesthetising bees for behavioural research.  | 🔗    | 🌐         | 1.3K  | 130<br>37  |
| 07/06/2015<br>6:38 pm  | Thinking of writing a review? Here's your chance. A message from...   | 🔗    | 🌐         | 892   | 111<br>26  |

Note that if you're reading this report,

Like us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/InsectesSociaux?ref=bookmarks>

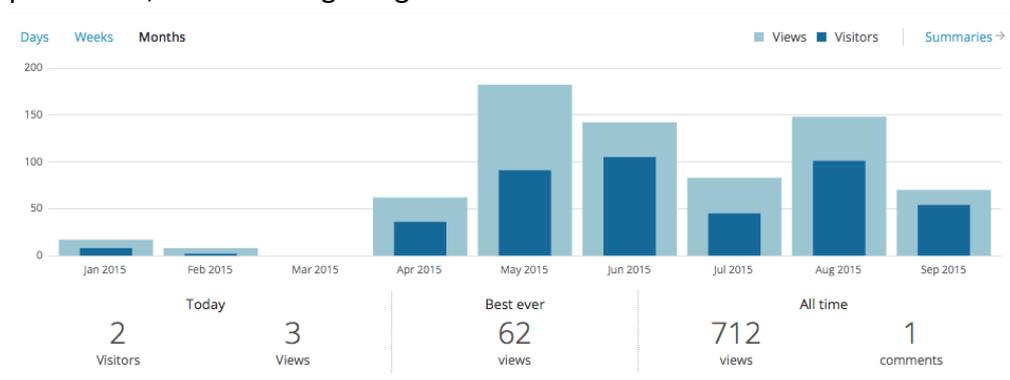
Follow the blog

<http://insectessociaux.com/>

and follow us on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/inssociaux>

Please promote these efforts to your friends, colleagues and students. Likes on Facebook and re-tweets help to build our impact. The chart below shows the number of blog views per month, documenting the growth of our audience.



Also, please consider working with Marianne on blog content; she's keen to publish interviews and personal accounts of how research was performed. So far we've had a couple of great background essays on articles and one fascinating interview. Marianne can be contacted at [mpeso.inssoc@gmail.com](mailto:mpeso.inssoc@gmail.com) about blog content or with ideas about enhancing our use of social media.

### Highlighted articles

As part of building awareness of the journal and promoting articles, we have started publishing an article highlight in each issue. This has been a popular feature—authors are delighted to have their work highlighted, the highlights are used as blog content, and they promote reader interest in the journal.

### Reviews

Maggie Couvillon has very ably stepped into the review editor role and we're beginning to see the outcome of her efforts to recruit reviews for the journal. Reviews are important in garnering citations for the journal, but of course all journals have realized this and getting authors to write reviews is difficult. Review proposals can be directed to Maggie at [maggiejanec@gmail.com](mailto:maggiejanec@gmail.com).

## **Section information**

### **Andean and Caribbean section**

The next meeting of the Andean and Caribbean section will be held in 2017 in the city of Tarapoto, in the middle of the Peruvian jungle.

The OGN Urku Estudios Amazónicos entities will be the organizer of the event.

### **Australasian section**

The Australasian section will hold its 2016 meeting in conjunction with the Australasian Evolution Society meeting, scheduled for November in Melbourne.

### **Brazilian Section**

We are glad to inform you that the Brazilian IUSSI Section (IUSSI SecBras) is organizing the III Workshop on Social Insects, our official event that happens regularly since 2013 and attended by dozens of researchers from several Brazilian institutions. The workshop will be held between 18th and 19th of February 2016 at the Bioscience Institute, São Paulo State University (Rio Claro, São Paulo State). For further information please do not hesitate to contact me at [iussi.secbras@gmail.com](mailto:iussi.secbras@gmail.com)

### **Central European Section**

Will holds its annual meeting in the third week of December, and will elect new office bearers during that meeting.

### **French Speaking Section**

French section held its biannual meeting (in between European and World meetings) in Tours from the 26th to the 28th of August this year. We had three invited speakers (Alain Lenoir, Judith Korb and Christoph Kleineidam) and 86 participants for a total of 57 talks and 19 posters. The meeting was a success with interesting science and friendly exchanges.

### **Indian section**

First Announcement

International Conference on Ants (11th ANeT) is to be organised in India in October-2017, details regarding registration, abstract submission and other relevant information will follow soon.

Ants of India - International Conference on Ants-2017

Here is the link to website-

[http://www.antdiversityindia.com/international\\_conference\\_on\\_ants-2017](http://www.antdiversityindia.com/international_conference_on_ants-2017)

### **North American Section**

The North American Section of the IUSSI will hold its section meeting in conjunction with the ESA/ICE joint meeting in Orlando, September 2016. We will have a one day meeting at the Rosen Plaza on Saturday, September 24, 2016 at the Rosen Plaza. This single-session meeting will feature 2 plenary speakers, as well as a mix of short-format talks and posters from students and faculty alike. We invite members from other sections to attend this meeting, which promises an opportunity to interact with fellow social insect researchers in a more

intimate and relaxed setting than will be available at the larger ESA/ICE meeting. The cost will be very low (i.e., no more than \$25). Check the NAS/IUSSI website for forthcoming details and registration ([iussi.cyberbee.net](http://iussi.cyberbee.net)).

#### New Officers Elected

We recently held elections to choose a new President-elect. Beginning 2016, the NAS executive committee will be comprised of the following members:

President – Sean O’Donnell

President-elect – Olav Rueppell

Past president – Amy Toth

Secretary/Treasurer – Karen Kapheim