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BOOK REVIEW

CCAMLR Science vol. 1–3 (1994–1996) — Journal of the Scientific Committee and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Resources

Already three years have elapsed since the peer-reviewed journal, CCAMLR Science, replaced the *Selected Scientific Papers* published by the CCAMLR each year from 1985 to 1993. Therefore, we can assume that a rather long-lasting honeymoon period for the new journal has come to an end and that time has come to make some appropriate comments on the technical aspects of the publication, its quality and overall balance. In fact, the editor of the CCAMLR Science addressed a request for such a review to the journals that cover Antarctic or related research, including the Polish Polar Research.

The preface of the CCAMLR Science says that the journal “*contains articles dealing with conservation and the rational utilization of Antarctic marine living resources and covers numerous disciplines including the biology and ecology of marine species, their population dynamics, ecological interactions and various issues of fishery economics and management*”, while the notes for the authors, placed at the end of each volume, give details of the journals publication policy and procedure. This policy requires that all manuscripts submitted for publication must first be considered by the CCAMLR Scientific Committee and its working groups. The CCAMLR document numbers are indicated in the Journals table of contents after the authors name, and references to documents originally submitted and discussed at CCAMLR meetings are included in brackets. Therefore, the journal is not open for publication to the world-wide community of scientists dealing with the topics mentioned in the preface, but is rather restricted to relevant scientists from the CCAMLR member countries, in particular to those who attend the annual CCAMLR Scientific Committee and working group meetings. This might explain the diminishing tendency regarding the number of papers published in the CCAMLR Science, from 15 to 9 per year during the three-year period reviewed.

In order to comment on the Journals table of contents over a three year period a brief statistic regarding the topics included in published volumes should be first presented. Of the 34 papers already published in the CCAMLR Science, the following three major topics were most frequently addressed: krill biomass, recruitment, ecology and fishery (9 papers); fish by-catch, biology, distribution and stock assessment (9); and the impact of krill exploitation and long-line fishery operations on Antarctic birds (8). On the basis of the number published papers it is clear that the remaining research presented by the journal in terms of reference, such as crab fishery and management (3 papers), fishing gear technology (2), bottom topography and hydrology (2), and the possible impact of monitoring procedures on penguin mortality (1) was of a lesser concern. The above-mentioned subject list of the journals activity seems to be relevant to the importance of the problems the CCAMLR Scientific Committee and the working groups are dealing with. However, serious gaps in the topics considered are obvious. These gaps include, among others, mammals, long-term variability (represented by a single paper only), and basic biological and genetic studies of the Antarctic species. There is no doubt that the fields of research mentioned could also have a significant impact on the management and conservation of Antarctic living resources. A more detailed review of the

CCAMLR working groups reports, including lists of submitted documents, indicates a much wider scope of interest than that represented by the papers published in the *CCAMLR Science* within the period reviewed. This means that the journals content is not fully representative of the scope of the CCAMLRs interests, in as much as a significant number of the papers presented as CCAMLR WG documents have been published elsewhere, including in such prominent international journals as *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, *Marine Biology*, and *Polar Biology*.

The three volumes already published are generally well-produced. Large fonts, high quality of line and halftone illustrations make the publications clear and easy to read. Looking from that perspective, the *CCAMLR Science* meets the technical standards of an international journal. Nevertheless, I dare to express some doubts regarding the technical or editorial issues vs. financial aspects of the publication. My concerns refer to the journals format, publication of abstracts, table headings and figure legends in four languages, number and size of figures accepted within individual papers, and inconsistency of figures presentation, *i.e.* in the text or after references. All these reservations suggest a rather liberal approach of the editorial board to the problem of journal space offered to the authors. A larger space available usually means higher costs of production, but not necessarily higher quality of publications. I know that this is a sensitive issue, however in the context of the journal-financing sources, *i.e.* from the member-countries allowance paid to the CCAMLR, the problem has to be addressed. Therefore, from the point of interest of a CCAMLR member-country, the journal publication costs should be kept down to a minimum possible level. This goal could be easily achieved by choosing a single language format, *i.e.* English, and a significant reduction of the space occupied by figures, either by limitation of their number, size, fitting them to the page format, or placing them only within the main text of a paper. I hope that a more restrictive editorial policy regarding the journal format and space available to the authors is possible now that the number of contributions to a volume of the journal made by members of the editorial board has decreased to an acceptable level, *i.e.* from over 65% in vol. 1, 30% in vol. 2, to about 10% in vol. 3.

The chances for a significant widening of the scope of publications in the journal to cover the numerous disciplines mentioned in the preface seems to be poor under the present editorial policy. The main goal to be achieved by the publication of selected papers or working documents submitted earlier to the Scientific Committee and its working groups is a wider dissemination and authentication by a peer-review process, resulting in contributions that are in accordance with the focus of CCAMLR and its member countries. In my opinion the editorial board should elaborate a new policy that would encourage more authors of those papers presented at CCAMLR WG meetings to contribute to the journal. I hope that by opening the journal for publication to a wider scientific audience some improvement in its contents, by introduction of the element of competition, might be achieved.

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SCAR provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and other organizations such as the UNFCCC and IPCC on issues of science and conservation affecting the management of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean and on the role of the Antarctic region in the Earth system. Learn more about us and what activities are on the horizon. The 9th SCAR Open Science Conference, due to take place in Hobart in July/August 2020, has been cancelled due to COVID-19 but we are planning to move some of the key elements online. Visit the OSC page for preliminary plans

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, also Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, and CCAMLR, is part of the Antarctic Treaty System. The Convention was opened for signature on 1 August 1980 and entered into force on 7 April 1982 by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, headquartered in Tasmania, Australia. In July 2013, the CCAMLR held a meeting in Bremerhaven in Germany, to decide whether to turn the Ross Sea into an MPA (Marine Protected Area). The deal failed due to Russia voting against it, citing uncertainty about whether the commission had the authority to establish a marine protected area.[2].