



Symposium of Contemporary Conservation Practice

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Guidelines for Abstract Submissions

Introduction

As a general guideline, oral presentations should report findings of original research, novel synthesis and review of existing information, or present new or conceptual ideas supported by evidence.

The criteria for acceptance of oral presentations is quality, novelty and relevance to the themes of the Symposium. Decisions to accept oral presentations into the programme are based on a review of the abstract by the Scientific Committee, so it is important that abstracts are well thought out and carefully written. It is essential that abstracts are as informative as possible about the aims, methods, key findings and implications for conservation practice.

We encourage authors to submit abstracts of up to 300 words. Please do not include graphics, references, tables or footnotes in the abstract. Excessively brief abstracts make it difficult to judge whether a submission is suitable for either an oral or a poster presentation. When an abstract is too brief to judge the scope of the work to be presented, the author(s) will be requested to expand it.

Abstracts must reflect a completed study and hence must contain key results and conclusions of the research undertaken. Note that abstracts that refer to results but do not actually contain results will not be accepted as either poster or oral presentations (e.g. "Results will be discussed", etc.). In some instances, where the abstract does not satisfy the criteria identified in these guidelines, but the Scientific Committee nevertheless believes that the research is significant, the abstract will be referred back to the author for revision and resubmission by a specified date. Failure to submit by said date will exclude the presentation from the programme.

Structure and Content of Abstracts

While abstracts, especially those of invited keynote speakers, vary in style, the following is a recommendation on how abstracts should be structured.

The [Abstract Submissions](#) page on the website gives the fields to submit abstracts for oral and poster presentations as well as proposals for special sessions and workshops. After entering the title and choosing the topic, click on the submission type, and the relevant fields will appear.



Scientific articles are usually written following the Scientific Format, and we recommend that abstracts follow this style. The abstract submission includes a title, authors, their affiliations and contact information, and the body of the abstract. The body of the abstract does not contain any headings, but should reflect in brief the presentation, covering in broad terms the Introduction, Aim, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, and Management Implications/Recommendations. These sections are described separately below.

The abstract text should be single-spaced; use a 12-point font; employ italics for species names, and contain NO graphics, figures, references or tables. The text must be right-justified. The SCCP uses the 's' form of English spelling. For instance: recognise, emphasise, analyse, realise, organisation, but impacts on wildlife are 'realized'. Capital letters are used only where essential and should be limited to specific nouns, and not used for municipality, board, committee, etc. Numbers between one and ten are to be written out in full, as are all numbers beginning a sentence. SCCP uses '%' and not 'per cent' and measurements, quantities and amounts are written as 6 cm, 40 km, R5 million, 42 876, and decimals as a dot (346 234.71). Currencies are denoted as R432.25 and US\$, £, €. Dates and centuries are to be formatted as 4 July 1978; in the 1990s (not 1990's), and in the 'twenty-first century'.

Title

The title should be a brief description of the information that the author wishes to present. Titles should be as descriptive as possible but must be succinct. Titles are to be written in sentence case in the field provided on the Submission Form.

Authors and institutional affiliations

ALL co-author details including email addresses and affiliations must be included (this is the last field on the Submission page, right at the bottom of the screen). The Presenting and Primary Authors should be indicated as such using the radio buttons.

Introduction

An introduction is usually two or three sentences that provide a background and context to the work that has been done. After reading the introductory part of the abstract, a reader should have a clear idea why the work was necessary, and why it was done. Complex studies may require longer introductions, especially if there are many interactive factors determining various outcomes.

Aim

This component provides a clear account of the purpose of the research. It is usually phrased as an objective, a question, or a hypothesis. Note that the working hypothesis, not the statistical null hypothesis, should be used if a hypothesis is stated.

Methods

The methods section describes (in a sentence or two) how, and usually where, the research was conducted. If the aim of the research was addressed using an experiment, then an outline of the experiment should be given. Alternatively, sampling procedures or methods of analysis should be described.

Results

The results section should highlight the key findings of the study, and should present actual values. It is useful to present some measure of variation and whether results were significant (e.g. animals given a feed supplement weighed 36.5 ± 4.6 kg and control animals weighed $34.9.5 \pm 4.1$ kg ($P=0.43$)). However, full test

statistics (F-values, degrees of freedom, etc.) should not be included in the abstract. While it is appropriate to present key results, the abstract should not contain too many results for a reader to assimilate. Formulas may be included in instances where this is critical for the argument or is a key result of the research.

When describing a difference between two treatments, try to describe the nature of that difference. For example, rather than saying “fertilised and unfertilised plants had significantly different growth rates”, say “fertilised plants grew significantly faster than unfertilised plants”.

Discussion and conclusion

The discussion is usually one to several sentences linking the results to the aim (and hence introduction). The conclusion is a simple statement that informs the reader what the authors’ final decision on the research was. When providing a conclusion, it is important not to confuse a conclusion with a summary of results, or overstate the importance of the conclusion.

Management implications/recommendations

Part of what separates the Conservation Symposium from other conferences is the focus on the ‘So what?’ question. We are less interested in your scientific methods (but you still need to convince your audience that appropriate methods were used to produce reliable and unbiased results) and are more interested in the implications of your findings for conservation practice.

Example of an abstract layout

Abstract Title:

The impacts of relocation on the genetic integrity of wildlife

Abstract Topic:

Choose the topic you feel best suited to your content

Submission Type:

Choose which type of presentation you would prefer

Abstract Summary (copy and paste into the field, and check formatting to ensure it matches the specifications above):

Wildlife are relocated annually throughout South Africa by both state conservation agencies and private game farmers. The impact of these translocations on the genetic integrity of the species involved has not been investigated and is particularly important within state protected areas which are considered refugia for South Africa’s wildlife. This research seeks to determine whether the translocation of impala throughout South Africa has had an impact on the genetic integrity of impala populations in protected areas administered by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Genetic analysis of 2 056 impala, using microsatellite markers, demonstrated that 75% ... Of these, 25% showed a heterozygosity ($h_e = 0.77$) similar to populations found in ... A similar pattern can be expected in other wildlife populations in that ... This research highlights the need for conservation agencies to set in place a mechanism to genetically screen wildlife destined to be released into their protected areas.

Confirmation Questions:

Answer these questions using the buttons provided

Comments for the Scientific Committee Chairperson:

Any details which you wish to bring to the attention of the Chair

Co-Author Details (only the primary institution can be used at this point):

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