

Special issue: Proceedings of the XII. Czech Ichthyological Conference

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Special issue: Proceedings of the XII. Czech Ichthyological Conference

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Ichthyological section of Czech zoological society is a relatively young community. It started its history after splitting former Czechoslovakia in 1993. Before both Czech and Slovak Ichthyologists gathered under the framework of the Slovak Zoological Society. The main activity of the new Czech section were the regular meetings – “Czech Ichthyological Conferences” held firstly every second year in Vodňany, South Bohemia, the site of a Fisheries Research Institute with a long tradition. Later the conference venue started to circulate between Vodňany, Prague and Brno and the periodicity was changed to every year and recently back to biennial. Especially when run once a two years ČIK represented a significant event in the life of the community attracting 40-50 lectures from the Czech Republic and also from neighboring countries, especially from Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and republics of former Yugoslavia.

XII Czech Ichthyological Conference took place on 19.-20. May 2010 in Vodňany. 41 lectures covering general ichthyology, fisheries management and ecology, genetics, reproduction, ontogeny, and aquaculture were presented to 80 participants. The abstracts of the conference are available from http://ichtyologie.agrobiologie.cz/data/sbornik_CIK_XII_10.pdf

Usual form of proceedings of the conference was a proceeding book in Czech or in Czech with English summaries (some of them can be downloaded from the section web page: <http://ichtyologie.agrobiologie.cz/index.htm>). Obviously, the circulation and impact of such proceedings was mostly limited to local audience. Low distribution of the knowledge and increased pressure on research organizations to publish the results in international journals were the main driving forces behind the decision of the steering committee of the Ichthyological Section to encourage submission of the conference papers into a special issue of Folia Zoologica. The announcement of the XII Czech Ichthyological Conference was published some three months before the date and the deadline for the submission was gradually shifted to mid-June 2010. The editorial office has received 13 manuscripts altogether. Unfortunately, many of the manuscripts did not satisfy the requirements for publishing in the international journal and could not be published in their current form. The final number of manuscripts which passed the peer review procedure successfully was five (Havelka, M. et al., Prchalová, M. et al., Kalous, L. & Knytl, M., Stejskal, V. et al., Čech, M. & Vejřík, L.) what is not sufficient for a full size special issue. Therefore, in order not to delay manuscript publishing, the editorial office had to put together other accepted manuscripts submitted in ordinary way. Obviously, there was an effort to put together topics related to ichthyology so the volume is to some extent consistent. Unfortunately only two other “ripe” fish manuscripts were ready for publication, so this volume contains also two herpetological and one mammalogical paper.

So the experiment with creation of international proceedings of the Czech Ichthyological Conference can hardly be judged as a tremendous success due to moderate interest of the authors and high mortality of the papers. The reasons may lie in relatively short notice to the authors prior to the deadline, in lower quality requirements in previous proceeding and also in the fact that truly aquaculture papers were considered as more suitable for other journals. The obvious question of the steering committee is how to proceed on. The pressure on publishing in international journals is unlikely to decrease. In fact, recent system of evaluation of research outputs in the Czech Republic gives zero grading to nonperiodical conference proceedings not reported in the international databases like WOK or Scopus. Therefore, there is a less value for the researchers to contribute to the traditional camera-ready proceedings. Czech Ichthyological Conference may quite well end-up with books-of-abstracts only. Obviously it is possible to give the ichthyologists another chance in XIII Czech Ichthyological

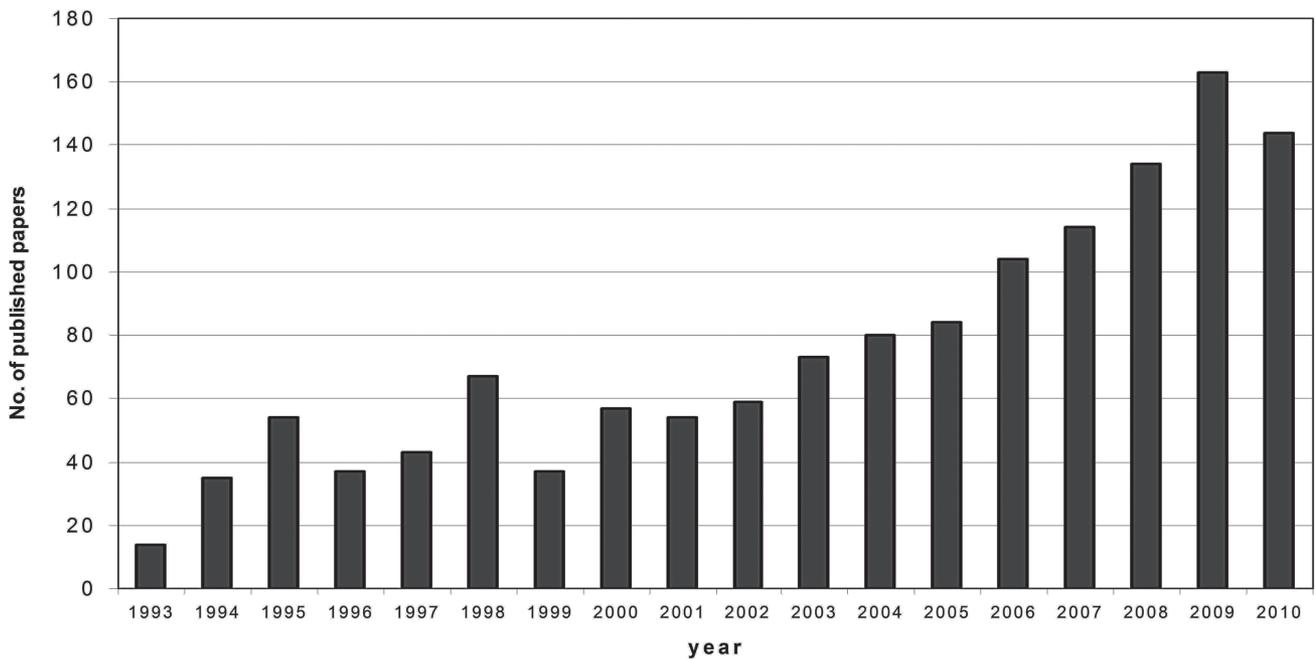


Fig. 1. Number of papers on Thomson's Web of Knowledge using 'Czech Republic' in the address and 'fish' in the 'topic' excluding genetic method FISH (Fluorescence In Situ Hybridization).

Conference in 2012. In that case, the steering committee should be prompt in announcing the meeting and the intention to publish meeting proceedings well in advance and in emphasizing the requirements for the quality of manuscripts and following the scope of the chosen journal. The ichthyology in the Czech Republic in fact passes over a historical boom in recent years (Fig. 1) and therefore, also with the contribution of foreign colleagues, there is certainly a potential to produce a strong journal issues with ichthyological results from Czech Ichthyological Conference.