

Establishing common research protocols between professional and citizen scientists for biodiversity research

(Social Transfer)

Project leads Dr. Paolo G. Albano (pgalbano@gmail.com), Univ.-Prof. Martin Zuschin

Abstract We organized a two-week workshop in our department with 3 citizen scientists who worked with us, learning from our methods, with the perspective that they would apply the same methods working from their premises. In this way, they could provide valuable scientific data for our research.

Keywords Taxonomy, biodiversity, shell collecting, Mediterranean Sea

Aims of the Third Mission activity Set up methodologies to involve citizen scientists in research projects

Cooperation partners outside the university sector Three citizen scientists

Cooperation partners from the scientific/research field None

Faculty Department of Palaeontology, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Geography and Astronomy

Timeframe 14/10/2019 - 25/10/2019

Funding Funds of the Faculty of Earth Sciences, Geography and Astronomy

Research basis It is 100% based on my research.

Social/economic relevance Involving citizen scientists in scientific research enables increasing the workforce for laborious tasks, improving citizen's knowledge and commitment to natural history research, improve the citizen's skills, increase citizen's self-esteem (most are retired people who find in this collaboration interest and motivation).

Integration into academic teaching/the curriculum

No

Impact

After the workshop, I involved four more citizen scientists (totalling 6 now) who are actively involved in my research project. Unfortunately, the COVID has slowed down if not halted collaboration, but contacts are still strong and everything will resume (including a further enlargement of the network) as conditions will allow meetings in person, free travel of people etc.

Transfer aspect of the activity

Knowledge on how to conduct natural history research has been transferred to citizen scientists. This led to writing a written protocol that can be shared with other citizen scientists, slowly creating a dense network of volunteers who support research.

Future orientation & sustainability

The future-oriented effect is to build a larger network to increase the workforce, augment the cultural exchange with citizen scientists (most are very skilled workers) and thus increase the size of research projects.

Achievement of objectives

The workshop led to a peer-reviewed scientific publication: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-020-02063-w>.

Measures to sustain this activity over the long term/expand it

I am actively recruiting new citizen scientists (efforts temporarily paused due to COVID-19).

Visibility

Scientific publications so far

Links/Publications

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-020-02063-w>
