

Pacific Conservation Biology and Clarivate's Web of Science

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Databases of the research literature are critical tools for practitioners and academics working in conservation. They provide speedy, economical data retrieval relative to searching hard copy, thereby facilitating meta-analyses, literature reviews, staying abreast of new developments, and following collaboration networks. Databases are selective, though, so awareness of published literature is dependent on where it is indexed. Inclusion in one of the more selective databases may also be taken as a sign of relevance or quality, leading some researchers to only consider papers included in prestigious databases. In this context, some authors considering a submission to *Pacific Conservation Biology* ask, 'Is *Pacific Conservation Biology* in Web of Science?' To answer this question a little background is needed.

Web of Science (WoS), known until January 2014 as Web of Knowledge (WoK), is published by Clarivate Analytics (the previous publisher was Thomson Reuters). It covers books, journals and conference proceedings. Although known as a single database, it actually comprises several distinct specialist citation indexes or other resources (Clarivate 2020a):

- Web of Science Core Collection
- BIOSIS Citation Index
- Chinese Science Citation Index
- Data Citation Index
- Russian Science Citation Index
- SciELO Citation Index
- Biological Abstracts, BIOSIS Previews
- CABI: CAB Abstracts and Global Health
- FSTA – the food science resource
- Inspec
- KCI – Korean Journal Database
- Medline
- Zoological Record
- Current Contents Connect
- Derwent Innovations Index (Patents)

Subsidiary databases can be searched simultaneously by selecting the 'search all databases' tab on the search page, or subsidiary databases can be searched individually by selecting them in a dropdown menu on the search page. Individual institutional subscriptions to WoS vary in the subsidiary databases they contain and how far back in time the subscriptions run. It is therefore possible for a search in WoS at one institution

to give different results to a search in WoS at another institution, depending on the range of databases and subscription years at each institution.

For many years *Pacific Conservation Biology* has been listed in BIOSIS Citation Index, BIOSIS Previews and Zoological Record, so papers in *Pacific Conservation Biology* were found in a WoS (all databases) search if the subscription included one or more of these databases. With that caveat, it can be said that *Pacific Conservation Biology* is listed in WoS and has been for many years.

For many people, though, WoS means the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC), which is the well-known specialist database within WoS that was called Web of Science with Conference Proceedings before January 2014. It covers journals, conference proceedings and books, with a bias to the sciences. Once again, the WoSCC is not a single database, but has multiple components (Clarivate 2020a):

- Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)
- Book Citation Index (BKCI)
- Conference Proceedings Citation Index (CPCI)
- Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE)
- Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)
- Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI)

Science journals can be covered in the ESCI or the SCIE, with journals in the SCIE having the further distinction of being listed in Clarivate's Journal Citation Reports (JCR) and receiving an impact factor. For inclusion in the ESCI, journals must meet 24 quality criteria focused on editorial rigour and good practice. To qualify for the SCIE, they must meet a further four impact criteria (Clarivate 2020b).

Earlier this year CSIRO Publishing was informed that *Pacific Conservation Biology* has been included in the ESCI and will, in time, be evaluated for inclusion in the SCIE. Thus, it is true to say that *Pacific Conservation Biology* is now included in the WoSCC, but it is not in the SCIE and therefore not in the JCR and does not have an impact factor.

The listing in ESCI and therefore the WoSCC is important because the WoSCC is regarded as the most rigorous and selective of the major databases relevant to conservation science, so inclusion is a sign of journal quality. Some researchers use only the WoSCC to search for journal papers, so without a listing in the WoSCC *Pacific Conservation Biology* was

invisible to them. Following the listing more researchers will locate *Pacific Conservation Biology* papers, which should mean more citations and a growing reputation for the journal and its authors. Note, though, that only *Pacific Conservation Biology* papers published since the date of acceptance into the ESCI will be listed in the WoSCC. Back issues will appear in a WoS (all databases) search if the subscription includes BIOSIS Citation Index, BIOSIS Previews or Zoological Record.

What about the impact factor? *Pacific Conservation Biology* does not have one because the journal is not yet listed in the JCR. For those who accept the criticisms of the impact factor specifically (Vanclay 2012), journal ranking in general (see the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment <https://sfdora.org>, accessed 1 August 2020) or the citation analyses on which rankings are based (MacRoberts and MacRoberts 2018), this is not a problem – once visibility is covered via a listing in WoSCC, the rest is irrelevant. In favour of the views of those who think this way are the empirical results across a range of research disciplines confirming that one cannot infer the quality of a paper from the journal in which it is published (e.g. Seglen 1992, 1997; Zhang *et al.* 2017). For those who need to establish journal ranking, tools other than the impact factor are freely available. For example, SCImago (SCImago 2020) provide comprehensive journal ranking statistics that can be used as alternatives to the impact factor. Some of these ranking statistics, plus others from sources such as Google Scholar, are available for *Pacific Conservation Biology* at <https://www.publish.csiro.au/media/products/PCB.pdf> (accessed 1 August 2020).

Putting everything together, *Pacific Conservation Biology* is listed in the WoSCC and therefore the WoS. Prospective authors

can be confident that publications in *Pacific Conservation Biology* have high visibility. Those who are concerned about comparative journal rankings may use alternative statistics in lieu of an impact factor for the moment, although an impact factor may come in the future.

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