In the Spotlight: The Society of Population Ecology

This month’s Society Zone highlights Springer’s publishing partnerships in Japan. Springer Japan celebrated 25 years in 2008, and one of the Japanese society journals published out of the office in Tokyo is Population Ecology, official publication of the Society of Population Ecology.

The journal *Population Ecology* publishes refereed original research articles and reviews on various aspects of population ecology, from the individual to the community level. Special Features, collections of research articles and reviews organized by the editors, are published and focus on specific research topics. *Population Ecology*, named *Researches on Population Ecology* until 2000, has a successful publishing history of over 40 years.

The Society of Population Ecology was founded in 1961 for the purpose of promoting and fostering the study of population ecology. Now the activities of both the Society and its publication cover broader aspects of population ecology and population biology, in both basic and applied fields. The Society holds academic meetings annually and the main part is an international symposium.

Interview with Professor Takashi Saitoh

Society Zone talked to Professor Saitoh, Chief Editor of *Population Ecology*.

Professor Takashi Saitoh obtained his PhD in applied zoology from Hokkaido University, where he is now Professor at the Field Science Center. He has been involved in the editorial board of *Population Ecology* for over 20 years, initially as Associate Editor and since 2007 as Chief Editor. He has experience of working as a newspaper reporter and of studying wildlife ecology at the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute of the Japanese Government. Professor Saitoh’s main interest is dynamics and spatial structure of rodent populations.

► Professor Saitoh, could you tell us a little about the history and vision of the Society of Population Ecology?

► The Society of Population Ecology was established in 1961 by Japanese entomologists. The Society has published its scientific journal in English periodically since 1962. Most of the founding members were entomologists and theoreticians, therefore insect ecology and methodological studies were historically strong fields in the journal. However, a dramatic reformation of the journal took place in 1994, with a new definition of the journal coverage and a renewal of the editorial board. This sought to balance the various research fields and to include a number of researchers from overseas. The journal renaming came into effect in 2000. The main purpose of the Society is to make *Population Ecology* the leading journal in this field of population ecology.

► You began publishing the journal with Springer in 1999. What was it that the Society was primarily looking for in a publisher?

► In publishing the journal with Springer, we expected the visibility of the journal to rise; we wanted to increase the international recognition of the journal. One obvious advantage was to have journal articles available online through the Internet. Before we came to Springer, 238 libraries worldwide subscribed to the journal (printed version). The number was high for a scientific journal published in Japan, but we were not satisfied with it.

► How has the journal benefited by being part of the Springer journal family?

► At present, I am happy that *Population Ecology* is accessed through thousands of libraries in the world. We believe that the wide accessibility has contributed to the steady rise in the impact factor, which keeps us smiling. Also, Editorial Manager and other electronic means help facilitate the editorial process effectively.

► What is your day-to-day relationship with the publisher, especially with your editor at Springer?

► We receive good support. We have three Springer contacts responsible for different aspects of editing and publishing the journal. They communicate well amongst themselves as well as with us, both in English and Japanese. They always do their best to answer our questions, which are not always easy. This interactive assistance enables us to make an enquiry or request without hesitation, and has contributed to a very good working relationship.
What is the key success factor for a scientific journal like Population Ecology?

I believe the quality and quantity of submissions to the journal is the key success factor. How to attract high quality papers to Population Ecology is critical and we endeavor to meet the goal. It is important that an author is happy with the manuscript review process and the publishing quality. If an author is pleased with the publication of his paper in Population Ecology, he/she is likely to submit another good paper to our journal.

What are the trends in the area, and what are your future plans for the journal?

The research field of population ecology is expanding its scope, merging conservation biology and ecological genetics. Population ecology is concerned with issues such as biological resource management too. However, as in an aphorism by Dr. Yosiaki Itô, who was president of the Society of Population Ecology between 1989 and 1992, “Basic studies are just needed to resolve applied problems,” we regard basic studies as the most important focus in Population Ecology. In the meantime, we would like to promote collaboration with symposia organized by other societies, as well as our own symposia, to enhance Special Features in the journal.

Society Zone thanks Professor Saitoh for this interview.

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Springer Japan: Celebrating 25 Years of Society Publishing

Springer Japan, ever since its inception in 1983, has established an excellent reputation for the highest quality publications in English and Japanese, in the fields of life sciences, medicine, mathematics, physics and engineering. The total number of books published to date is 1,235, of which 486 are in English.

In 1992 the first contract to publish a society journal was signed – with the Japan Surgical Society for their journal Surgery Today. From the start, Springer realised the importance of having editorial and production staff in Japan, and quickly became a trusted partner for Japanese societies, with more and more Japanese societies turning to Springer to publish their journals.

Springer offered the services that the Japanese societies needed to internationalise their publications:

- International visibility
- Global sales and marketing
- Electronic publishing with innovative services
- Editorial and production staff in Japan – no language barriers, no time differences to contend with, an understanding of the situation in Japan

By 1998 Springer published 16 Japanese society- or institute-owned journals; that number has grown to 57 in 2009. Springer has become the biggest society journal publisher in Japan.

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