

EDITOR'S CONFERENCE REPORT*

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The 30th Annual IAMSLIC Conference was held in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/australasia/hobart/>) (“Under Down Under”), 5-10 September, 2004. All sessions were held in Hobart at the Headquarters of CSIRO Marine Research, (<http://www.marine.csiro.au/>) the largest marine science research organization in Australia. In attendance were more than 80 people from 21 countries, among them attendees from 12 U.S. States, 6 Australian States, 2 Mexican States, and 1 Canadian Province. The largest number came from Tasmania, followed by California, Queensland, and then New Zealand. Because this was the first IAMSLIC Conference in the Southern Hemisphere, a number of new countries were represented. Conference participants came from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Mexico, Micronesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Philippines, Senegal, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam. Conference participants represented a mix of libraries, including one-person marine-station libraries in isolated locations, academic and institutional libraries in developing countries, libraries in large research institutions, and large academic libraries. Representatives from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA) and Elsevier also attended and gave presentations.

Under the general theme “Voyages of Discovery: Parting the Seas of Information Technology”, following the opening reception on Sunday evening, there were two days and two half days of contributed and invited papers, panel discussions, and brief oral summaries of posters on display, by librarians, research scientists, and database vendors. The sessions began with a CSIRO research scientist’s report on movement and migration of pelagic fishes (Southern Bluefin Tuna) with a description of various tagging methods. Internal tags can send data and by measuring stomach temperature can document when and how much the fish eat, because the temperature drops when food is eaten, then rises as food is digested.

The keynote address was given by Dr. James Bowen on the history of Great Barrier Reef (GBR) scientific investigation. (See also:

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/reef/reef1_flash.html) This intriguing report was also a fascinating overview of the development of Australian natural history. After the very popular account of Capt. James Cook’s shipwreck on the GBR in 1770 aroused European interest in Australia and the GBR, a new era of discovery began. In this beginning of Australian natural history, explorers looked for familiar plants and animals to put in existing categories, only to find that in Australia, nothing fit into the established classifications, everything was unfamiliar, and Australia was a paradox. The incredible fauna and flora of Australia played a large role in the increasing acceptance of

Darwinism and led to the next era of thought in Australian natural history, nature as a process. Preoccupation with understanding the strange land biota caused most Australians to ignore the marine environment, including the GBR, and no Australian marine research stations were founded until well into the 20th century. The 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill caused Australians to fear it could happen to them, increased interest in local marine biology and led to the founding of Australian marine research institutions, (e.g. CSIRO Marine Research, (<http://www.marine.csiro.au/>), Australian Institute of Marine Science (<http://www.aims.gov.au/>) and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (<http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/>)) ushering in the next era of natural history, an era of conservation and management. Much more on this topic can be found in the recent book (Bowen, J, & Bowen, M. 2002. *The Great Barrier Reef: History, Science, Heritage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

As a further reminder of the conference location, the keynote address was followed by a session on Pacific voyages. A report on French voyages of discovery in the Age of Enlightenment (18th century) noted that after the publicized voyages of Captain Cook, King Louis XVI of France, seeking to rival England, supported voyages into the largely unknown South Pacific, first sending La Pérouse, who looked for French trade outlets, as well as making detailed natural history observations (even sailing with a scholar's library on board) and who managed to send a copy of his detailed trip report from Botany Bay, New Holland (Australia) before being shipwrecked and lost. D'Entrecasteaux was then sent to look for La Pérouse, and circumnavigated New Holland and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), leading to the recognition that the latter was an island. Before he finished his voyage, he fell ill and died, his ships were captured and sold, and his detailed reports, full of so much new information, did not reach France until years later. The session also included reports of letters in the collection of the library of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in New Caledonia, from Victorian British women voyaging in the Pacific, reflecting the women's conflicted thinking about the benefits of Christianity and colonization to South Pacific natives. Other reports covered information literacy initiatives in marine education in Fiji; and open source software in the Solomon Islands.

A wide-ranging panel discussion on open archives (OA) initiatives, institutional repositories, and serials preservation included participants representing Oregon State University, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Southampton Oceanography Centre, University of Florida, IAMS LIC, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Syracuse University, University of Connecticut, and Australian Institute of Marine Science. Material in open archives includes faculty publications, student papers, institutional records, data sets, e-journals, websites, etc. Discussions covered such topics as benefits, promotion, soliciting material, mediated deposits, LOCKSS, citation impact (some OA journals are cited 85% more than regular journals) preservation and stability, cataloging and indexing, access, delivery, and competition among depositories.

On the next day interesting reports were presented on a variety of topics. MANDATE is a database on Indian mangroves, with floral, faunal, ecological and other information on these important trees, including a list of expert scientists working on mangroves. A report

was presented on Australian input to ASFA (Aquatic Sciences & Fisheries Abstracts), and later in the Conference, CSA representatives gave an overview of new developments in ASFA. ASFA is discussed at nearly every IAMSLIC Conference, as ASFA is probably the most used database worldwide for marine science librarians and researchers, and at some remote locations is the only database available. The system of Patron Placed Holds on items in the various libraries of the University of Maryland was described. A detailed overview was presented on handling deep-sea video data at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institution (MBARI) (<http://www.mbari.org/>). Over 300 MBARI dives a year have produced over 15,000 videotapes, which must be annotated, archived, and made accessible for research.

On the afternoon of the second day, two virtual poster sessions were presented, in which poster presenters had five minutes each to provide oral summaries of their poster topics. Poster presenters came from many parts of the world, and their topics were equally wide-ranging: Korea, serials article bibliographical data elements; New Caledonia, the library of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community; Philippines, the World Fish Center, and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC); Queensland, mold in the library; Senegal, African digital information; Texas, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in the library and SFX in the library; Western Australia, IT in a small marine science library; Thailand, Faculty of Fisheries Library; Vietnam, fisheries library services in Vietnam.

A panel session on the role of librarians trapped by the Web in the rapidly changing world of digital information included reports on librarians as knowledge and information managers, and the future of sci/tech librarians. A later session covered the natural role of marine science librarians as institutional historians (in British Columbia and California) followed by a magnificent photographic tour of southern Australian marine life by Karen Gowlett-Holmes, a leading Australian marine biologist who is also a prize-winning photographer (<http://www.auscape.com.au/gowlett.htm>).

Another session included a description of the Mexican Theses in Oceanography Database, and another update of the latest information on search engines, which is never published in the *Proceedings* because it is too soon out of date.

The Polar Libraries Colloquy (PLC)

(<http://arcticcentre.urova.fi/polarweb/polar/plcmain.htm>) held a half-day joint meeting with IAMSLIC, with a session of papers and virtual posters. PLC members from Cambridge, UK; Kingston, Tasmania; and Anchorage, Alaska discussed several topics, including the Scott Polar Institute Library; data management; polar and oceanographic data; mining old polar information; Alaskan polar library resources; and geographic information. The afternoon featured a site visit to the Australian Antarctic Division (<http://www.aad.gov.au/>), which included tours of the Library, the Multimedia Unit, the Map Collection, and the Data Centre.

The final session of the Conference included reports on the newly-organized Latin American Regional Group of IAMSLIC (http://ola.icmyl.unam.mx/larg/Default_en.asp); a project to digitize historical aerial photos of Florida, and the significance of GIS to the project; and the role of libraries in supporting fisheries policy and management, for example, the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Social events on the program included the opening reception at CSIRO Headquarters; a reception given by the Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania at Government House (<http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/governor/>); the Conference Dinner featuring local fish and musical entertainment (<http://www.view.com.au/mures/upper.htm>); and at the close of the Conference, the Peppermint Bay Cruise (<http://getaway.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=17942>) in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel followed by a sumptuous lunch. The boat trip also gave us a chance to see sea eagles and an aquaculture facility for Atlantic salmon.

As usual, the underlying themes of this conference were resource sharing and networking, and both were strengthened considerably during this week in Hobart. The conference organizers and local hosts are to be congratulated and thanked for a well-organized, very interesting, and highly successful conference. The venue played a role as well. Tasmania definitely deserves another visit. The fauna (<http://www.tased.edu.au/tot/fauna/>) and flora (<http://www.anbg.gov.au/emblems/aust.emblem.html>) and landscapes are extremely interesting, the food and wine are excellent, and the Tasmanians encountered in Hobart and elsewhere on the island are about the friendliest and most helpful people to be found anywhere.

IAMSLIC 2005 will be in Rome, Italy.

*Adapted from: Markham, J.W. 2005. 30th Annual IAMSLIC in Tasmania, Australia. *Library Waves*. UCSB Library: the Newsletter of the Employees of the Libraries at UC Santa Barbara October/November 2004
[<http://www.library.ucsb.edu/internal/libwaves/octnov04/iamslic.html>]