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SETTING PATHS IN CITIZEN SCIENCE: BIODIVERSITY, NETWORKS, OPEN SCIENCE AND PLATFORMS

FIRST ITALIAN CITIZEN SCIENCE

CONFERENCE

ROMA 2017

**SETTING PATHS IN CITIZEN SCIENCE:
BIODIVERSITY, NETWORKS, OPEN SCIENCE AND PLATFORMS**

November 23-24, 2017

Conference Hall, National Research Council

November 25, 2017

Conference Hall, Civic Museum of Zoology

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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“ASK THE EXPERT”, AN INITIATIVE OF PROJECT CSMON-LIFE

Citizen Science MONitoring, Biodiversity, Observer quality, Validation

CSMON-LIFE (Citizen Science MONitoring) aims at involving citizens in monitoring Italian biodiversity by a citizen science approach. Novel IT tools for mobile devices have been developed in the framework of the project, providing citizens with a platform for collecting and sharing geo-referenced data of target species. CSMON-LIFE also offered another option to participants, the “Ask the expert” campaign, which aims at encouraging citizens to satisfy their curiosity, by trying to identify and reporting other organisms other than the project’s target species, and having experts verifying their identification.

This report analyses the data of taxa collected in the “Ask the expert” campaign, in order to evaluate the degree of citizen’s participation and engagement, the quality of observations, the distribution of observations, as well as the most intriguing taxa to citizens.

The data analysed were: 1) amount of sightings, entrants and mean number of sightings per entrant; 2) temporal and spatial distribution of observations; 3) estimates of the correct identifications; 4) which taxa have been reported by citizens.

During two years, more than 500 citizen scientists reported ca. 3000 observations, with a linear growth over time, and a certain degree of heterogeneity in temporal distribution, with evident seasonal peaks. Since the project started in Lazio, observations came mainly from this region. However, a high number of sightings were collected in other regions (Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna, especially). The whole dataset of observations included several taxonomic groups from plants to animals.

As far as animal taxa are concerned, the greatest number of observations was about invertebrates, which triggered curiosity in most people, like spiders and insects (especially species of the orders Lepidoptera and Coleoptera). As far as vertebrates are concerned, most observations were collected on birds, mammals and reptiles. Citizens also provided new data on the occurrence of some alien animal species in Italy.

Finally, these results enable us to make assumptions about which taxonomic groups could be best taken into account in future biodiversity projects aiming at involving citizens.

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