

RECENT SEA GRANT PUBLICATIONS AND ASFA: COVERAGE, CURRENCY AND CONSISTENCY

Janet Webster
Oregon State University
Hatfield Marine Science Center
2030 Marine Science Drive
Newport, OR 97365
Janet.Webster@orst.edu

ABSTRACT: In its quest to promote the wise utilization and conservation of the United States' ocean and coastal resources, the National Sea Grant Program sponsors a vast array of research and educational ventures. Much of this is published, either in print or electronically. Locating this information can be an adventure even though several useful tools and a central depository exist. I examined one obvious tool, *Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts*, for the currency and consistency its coverage of recent Sea Grant publications. Comparison of the last 1998 issue of *Sea Grant Abstracts* and the June-July 1999 Sea Grant Depository database electronic updates to ASFA raise some questions on how best to locate recent Sea Grant publications.

The Background

The National Sea Grant Program's Publications

The United States' National Sea Grant Program promotes "the wise utilization and conservation of the country's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources." To do so, it supports basic and applied research as well as educational endeavors. The publications generated range from articles in journals to conference proceedings to curriculum. The target audiences include the general public, scientists, teachers, and industry.

The National Sea Grant Depository (NSGD), located in the Pell Library, University of Rhode Island, attempts to collect all Sea Grant publications. Its success depends on the cooperation of the 29 colleges and institutions generating the information. The NSGD maintains a web searchable database of over 72,000 publications which is updated regularly. This is available at: <http://nsgd.gso.uri.edu/search.htm>.

Sea Grant Abstracts is produced quarterly by Woods Hole Data Base, Inc. This value-added print publication contains brief descriptions of the publications and is organized by subject. It promotes and facilitates the purchase of publications originating from the National Sea Grant College Program.

Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts

Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) is an abstracting and indexing service covering the world's literature on the science, technology, management, and conservation of marine, brackish water, and freshwater resources and environments. It provides broad access to the mainstream and gray literature. Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA) has informal arrangements with many of the Sea Grant institutions; they agree to send their publications to CSA, and CSA will index most of them.

The Questions

1. Does *ASFA* cover Sea Grant publications adequately?
2. Does *ASFA* cover Sea Grant publications in a timely manner?
3. Is *ASFA* consistent in covering Sea Grant publications?

The Method

Using the most recently received issue of *Sea Grant Abstracts* (v.13 (4), 1998) and the June-July 1999 NSGD database electronic updates, I searched each of the 384 entries in *ASFA* during the second week of September 1999. If a publication was not found using title or author, I would do at least one additional search using an appropriate strategy.

I sorted publication types into three groups using the Sea Grant coding. Reprints were the largest group and consisted of all publications with R in Sea Grant number.

Example: T.W. Miller, 1996. First record of the green crab, *Carcinus maenas*, in Humboldt Bay, California. *California Fish and Game*, 82 (2):93-96, 1996. CUIMR-R-96051.

Technical reports and workshops made up the second group.

Examples: Sharon Meeker et al., 1995. The Great bay Watch: Five year report, 1990-1994. NHU-T-007.

C.E. Helsley (ed.), 1997. Open ocean aquaculture '97: Charting the future of ocean farming. Proceedings of an international conference, Maui, Hawaii, April 23-25, 1997. HAWAU-W-97-002.

All other publications including educational materials, handbooks, multi-media, theses, surveys, and administrative reports were grouped together.

Example: E.A. Seaman (ed.), 1998. Sea Grant's guide to marine biotechnology experts. WISCU-D-98-001.

The Results

1. Does *ASFA* cover recent Sea Grant publications adequately?

Adequacy was measured in sheer numbers. *ASFA* does well with the reprints. These tend to be indexed as contents of journals, not as Sea Grant publications. *ASFA* appears to cover other Sea Grant publications poorly. (See Tables 1-4.)

2. Does *ASFA* cover Sea Grant publications in a timely manner?

This is harder to assess. Sea Grant institutions are inconsistent with the distribution of their publications. In general, *ASFA* lagged behind the NSGD electronic postings. *Sea Grant Abstracts* is slow to appear, so *ASFA* fares well in comparison. More work could be done with timeliness.

3. Is *ASFA* consistent in covering Sea Grant publications?

Reprints consistently appear, although with no Sea Grant number. Often the Sea Grant link is through the author's affiliation.

Proceedings are inconsistently indexed. When they do appear, they are usually well-indexed, ie. each paper is cited.

Seafood sciences, educational materials, and publications aimed at the general public are usually not entered. Also, fishery management publications appear to be a low priority. Journal articles outside of the mainstream are often overlooked as well.

The Recommendations for Improving Access to Sea Grant Publications

ASFA does cover a great deal of gray literature. However, it does not index every Sea Grant publication. Should it fully index the myriad of Sea Grant brochures and information leaflets? I don't think so. It could do a better job on workshop proceedings, handbooks, theses, and technical reports.

Given the vagaries of distribution of the Sea Grant publications by the issuing institutions, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts is not completely to blame for the gaps. Greater cooperation between the NSGD and Cambridge Scientific may help improve access while avoiding duplication of effort.

Recommendation 1.

Review and agree on what types of Sea Grant publications to index in *ASFA*. This could be done by Sea Grant letter code, subject, or combination. Review could be done by NSGD staff, CSA, and IAMSLIC users.

Recommendation 2.

Add the NSGD as an *ASFA* input center. As the Depository already tracks and collects Sea Grant publications, this would relieve CSA of the responsibility.

Recommendation 3.

Add the Sea Grant publication number to *ASFA* citations. This would facilitate locating and ordering the documents.

Recommendation 4.

Encourage the NSGD to continue to post recently received publications on its Web site.

Table 1 – All Publications

Source	Total in Source	Total in ASFA	% in ASFA
Sea Grant Abstracts v.13 (4)	195	75	38.5%
June 1999 NSGD	138	41	29.7%
July 1999 NSGD	51	8	15.7%

Table 2 - Reprints

Source	R- no ASFA	R- ASFA	Total Rs in Source	% in ASFA
Sea Grant Abstracts v.13 (4)	42	72	114	63.2%
June 1999 NSGD	50	41	91	45.1%
July 1999 NSGD	12	7	19	36.8%

Table 3 – Workshops and Technical Reports

Source	W&T - no ASFA	W &T - ASFA	Total W&Ts in source	% in ASFA
Sea Grant Abstracts v.13 (4)	22	3	25	8.0%
June 1999 NSGD	4	0	4	0.0%
July 1999 NSGD	7	0	7	0.0%

Table 4 – Other Publications

Source	All Other - no ASFA	All Others - ASFA	Total All Others in Source	% in ASFA
Sea Grant Abstracts v.13 (4)	56	0	56	0.0%
June 1999 NSGD	43	0	43	0.0%
July 1999 NSGD	24	1	25	4.0%

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Craig Emerson of Cambridge Scientific Abstracts for his assistance.