

Literature Cited

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Memo

To: Dr. MacIntosh
From: Dick Neves
Date: February 17, 1997
Subject: Baker and Hornback MS

Enclosed is my review of the manuscript sent by you (I believe) for my review. It is obvious to me that Dr. Hornback played a secondary role in its design and write-up. The work appears to be mussel sampling done on contract, with no initial sampling or statistical design. The occurrence of L. higginsi in some samples, and previous collections of this species by previous studies was latched onto as possibly suitable for publication (now with the zebra mussel threat). I regret that there is more noise than music coming from within and between the lines of narrative presented as research.

/cwl

Baker and Hornbach MS

This manuscript has some interesting information on L. higginsi, but there are numerous topics that distract from its suitability for publication. The following comments address my major concerns.

1. The document is not well written or proofed, reading more like a student thesis than a polished manuscript. A rewrite is in order.
2. The Abstract has little to say; there are few results. The essence of the Abstract is that L. higginsi was found in high quality sand habitat, along with most other mussel species. This is hardly a revelation for this or other rare riverine mussels, and begs the question of whether these results deserve publication in a national journal.
3. The Introduction is far too long, covering subjects that are not directly related to the research.
4. Methods - There is insufficient description of what was done and how (see text).
5. Quantitative quadrats (25 m²) were taken at sites of undefined size. How accurate were these assessments (% of area sampled?)
6. It is not believable that the authors mapped "precise habitat of L. higginsi" collected by other researchers as early as 1980. This assumes that habitat characteristics have not changed and that exact locations are known.
7. Sampling of abiotic parameters (e.g., water depth, bottom current), if done on different dates, is not directly comparable in statistical analyses. The limited sampling done, relative to total area of each site, was probably of minute consequence. The value (accuracy, precision) of these results are suspect unless the authors make a better case in their Methods.
8. The polygon analysis seems to be similar to that used in computing home range of animals. What citation concurs with its use for this analysis?
9. Places described in Results are not marked in Figure 1.
10. In essence, the results showed that L. higginsi tended to occur at locations with more species than locations with fewer species. This is common knowledge for most rare mussels. Am I missing some result of new significance?
11. Half of Discussion is speculation on zebra mussel effects. This topic should be reduced to 2 paragraphs.
12. The References section is padded with citations that are not essential. The authors, in their apparent zeal for documentation, have overdone the number of references in the text, especially "grey literature." Eight pages of references for such a brief paper is unwarranted.

THE AMERICAN MIDLAND NATURALIST

Reviewer's Evaluation Sheet

PLEASE RETURN WITH YOUR COMMENTS:

Check

_____ High Scientific merit - requires minor changes
(Review of revision not required)

_____ High scientific merit - requires major changes
(Review of revision required)

_____ Good scientific merit - acceptable with minor changes
(Review of revision not required)

_____ Good scientific merit - acceptable with major changes
(Review of revision required)

_____ Acceptable scientific merit - requires minor revision

_____ Acceptable scientific merit, but too long. (Significance does not justify length)

X _____ Worth publishing but belongs in a speciality or regional journal not the American Midland Naturalist.

_____ Questionable scientific merit - not publishable in American Midland Naturalist.

_____ Not publishable anywhere.