**Monitoring change in vertebrate abundance: the Living Planet Index**

**Collen B**, Loh J, McRae L, Whitmee S, Amin R, & Baillie JEM (2009) *Conservation Biology* 23: 317-327

I started working with Ben in late 2005/early 2006. I was working for WWF and had recently begun collaborating with Jonathan Baillie and the Institute of Zoology at ZSL on the Living Planet Index. Ben was hired as a post-doc to develop the LPI and make it more rigorous and robust. I think this was his first post-doc position after completing his PhD. Up until that time, the LPI was run as a project jointly between WWF and WCMC, but with no full-time staff. The LPI data were stored and the index calculated in excel spreadsheets. Updating and analysing the data was all done laboriously by hand. Ben’s first tasks were to build a database to store and manage the species population trend data which were the basis of the LPI, and then to code the index calculation in *R*. He also incorporated an alternative method for calculating the index by modelling the trend data using GAMs. This paper, written with other members of the team at ZSL working on biodiversity indicators, presents the results of all the improvements to the LPI dataset and methods that had been implemented since the LPI project made its home at ZSL, and was important in helping to establish the LPI as the leading indicator of trends in the state of global biodiversity. Working with Ben was always stimulating and enjoyable, and I wish I had collaborated with him on more projects and papers after we had both moved on from ZSL.

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