

## EDITORIAL NOTE

# Membership Characteristics of the American Society of Primatologists Through 2002

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Approximately once a decade, the Treasurer of the American Society of Primatologists (ASP) publishes a report on the current membership characteristics of the society. Each year, when members join the ASP they answer a series of questions designed to evaluate the composition of the society and the interests of its members. In 2002 the society had 691 members (443 full members, 222 student members, and 26 retired members). This represents only a 3.1% increase in overall membership during the past decade, and a decrease of 10.8% from 2001. Over the years, the proportion of student (32.1%) and retired (3.8%) members has grown considerably, while the proportion of full members (64.1%) has decreased correspondingly. Of 691 members, 59 were source-country primatologists who received complimentary (full or student) memberships. Women now comprise 57.7% of the membership, an increase of 5.9% over the last decade. Recent changes in the assessment and collection of annual dues have resulted in three important membership changes. First, 8.5% of current ASP members are source-country primatologists who receive complimentary memberships in the ASP and complimentary subscriptions to the *American Journal of Primatology (AJP)*. Second, mandatory subscription to *AJP* for full and student members in 2000 resulted in an immediate 8.7% decrease in membership, which appears to be continuing. Third, in 2002 approximately 50% of the members opted to pay their ASP dues with a credit card and/or via the Internet. It is hoped that the current decline in membership numbers represents a temporary trend, and that this loss will be reversed by 2004. *Am. J. Primatol.* 61:45–52, 2003. © 2003 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide the American Society of Primatologists (ASP) with an updated, detailed analysis of the characteristics of

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its membership as of 2002. These analyses are published every 10 years [Dukelow et al., 1983; French, 1993], and this work represents the third such report. Much has happened to the ASP and its membership in the last decade. This report compares, whenever possible, current data with the previous analyses (e.g., the percentage of males and females in the ASP), and in addition addresses new factors that were not available for analysis in earlier years (e.g., the impact on membership of credit card and web-based payments, and mandatory subscription to the *American Journal of Primatology* (*AJP*)). This is an important period in the history of the ASP, and the data contained herein should be scrutinized carefully and utilized in the preparation of a plan to address some important membership issues facing the society. The format of this presentation is similar to that used by French [1993]. One major difference between the current report and the two previous ones (Dukelow et al., 1983; French, 1993) is the relatively high proportion of individuals (30–37%) who did not respond to many of the demographic questions. This is in all likelihood a consequence of encouraging members to join the ASP through the ASP website. While responses to the demographic questions are always voluntary and confidential, on the website an additional page must be accessed, and many respondents may not have been willing to take the time to fill in the information requested on this page. The 2002 data are presented only in an adjusted form (percentage of those who responded to the questions). The raw data can be obtained from the author. On behalf of the person who will be writing the next version of this report for publication in 2013, I encourage all ASP members to provide all of the information requested of them.

## RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

As of 31 December 2002, the ASP had 691 members in good standing, consisting of 399 women (57.7%) and 292 men (see Table I). There were 222 student members (32.1%), 443 full members (64.1%), and 26 retired members (3.8%) registered in 2002. Fifty-nine members (8.5%) of the ASP are source-country primatologists who cannot afford to pay dues and who therefore receive complimentary membership in ASP (courtesy of the society) and a complimentary subscription to *AJP* (courtesy of the editorial board of *AJP* and John Wiley & Sons). These data indicate little growth in the number of ASP members since 1992, when the society had 670 members [French, 1993]. The proportion of student and retired members is growing; however, there has been a concomitant decrease in the number of full members. As recently as December 1999, the number of ASP members was 816. The requirement that all full and student members subscribe to *AJP* was initiated in 2000 and appears to be associated with a substantial decrease in membership (see Table II).

The ASP continues to be a diverse professional organization. Members of the society received their terminal degrees in at least 29 different academic disciplines (see Table III). Anthropology (38.4%), psychology (24.9%), and biology/zoology (18.7%) were the most frequently indicated disciplines for terminal degrees, as they were in previous reports [Dukelow et al., 1983; French, 1993]. Individuals with degrees in the veterinary sciences comprised only 4.6% of the ASP in 2002, compared to 7.8% in 1992 [French, 1993]. Efforts to recruit more primate veterinarians to join the ASP are warranted.

The data regarding members' research interests are somewhat different from those in previous reports; however, over one-third of the members did not specify a research interest/area of specialization (see Table IV). Approximately 44.1% of

TABLE I. Percentage of ASP Members by Demographic Characteristics

Category	1982	1992	2002
Females	Not available	51.8	57.7
Males	Not available	48.2	42.3
Regular members	81.4	76.4	64.1
Student members	18.6	22.8	32.1
Retired members	0.0	0.7	3.8
Complimentary memberships <sup>a</sup>	0	0	59
Total members	511	670	691

<sup>a</sup>Number of complimentary members, not percentage.

TABLE II. Number of Members in ASP in Selected Calendar Years

Year	Number of members
1977	462
1978	449
1979	451
1980	445
1981	468
1982	511
1992	670
1998 <sup>a</sup>	790
1999 <sup>b</sup>	816
2000 <sup>c</sup>	726
2001	775
2002	691

<sup>a</sup>Credit card payments first accepted.

<sup>b</sup>Web-based payments first accepted.

<sup>c</sup>AJP subscription first made mandatory for full and student members, and source country primatologists who could not afford to pay dues first offered complimentary membership.

members specified primate behavior as their "specialty in primatology" on the open-ended question in 2002, which is a decrease from over 50% of behaviorally-oriented members in 1992 [French, 1993] but is essentially equivalent to the 45.1% of members specializing in behavior reported in 1982 [Dukelow et al., 1983]. Members specializing in biomedical research, husbandry, reproduction, and anatomy continue to comprise decreasing percentages of the ASP membership, while those studying ecology/conservation (15.5%) and cognition/communication (8.5%) have increased their representation in the ASP. This is the second consecutive decade of increasing representation for primatologists interested in ecology and conservation.

Aside from a substantial drop in the number of ASP members that claim a National Primate Research Center as their employment environment, little else has changed in the distribution of primatologists across working environments (Table V). Colleges and universities are still the professional "homes" for the largest proportions of both full and student ASP members.

Table VI presents the "age" (decade of terminal degree) profile of the ASP. As shown in the table, most members of the society received their terminal degrees within the last three decades, and over 75% of those who received their

TABLE III. Percentage of ASP Members by Academic Discipline of Terminal Degree

Academic discipline	1992	2002 <sup>a</sup>
Anatomy	1.5	0.5
Animal behavior	0.0	3.2
Anthropology	28.5	38.4
Biological sciences	0.6	9.8
Ecology	0.0	1.8
Genetics	0.4	0.2
Geology	0.4	0.0
Medicine	2.9	2.1
Nutrition	0.0	0.9
Pharmacology	0.4	0.2
Physiology	2.5	1.6
Psychology	25.5	24.9
Veterinary medicine	7.8	4.6
Zoology	19.9	8.9
Other/unspecified	9.6	2.8 <sup>b</sup>
Total members	670	438/691

<sup>a</sup>Percentages are based on only those 438 of the 691 members who specified an academic discipline for their terminal degree.

<sup>b</sup>Includes only "other" academic disciplines for terminal degree.

TABLE IV. Percentage of ASP Members by Area of Specialization

Area of specialization	1982	1992	2002 <sup>a</sup>
Behavior	45.2	52.7	44.1
Biomedical	29.2	11.6	11.4
Anatomy	13.1	4.5	3.3
Husbandry	9.0	4.8	5.7
Ecology/conservation	2.0	9.6	15.5
Taxonomy/genetics	0.0	2.5	2.2
Reproduction	0.0	7.9	5.9
Cognition/communication	0.0	0.0	8.5
Other	0.0	0.0	3.5
Administration-unspecified	1.5	6.4	0.0
Total members	511	670	458/691

<sup>a</sup>Percentages are based on those 458 of the 691 members who specified an area of specialization.

degrees within the last two decades are women (171 women, 55 men). This was true in the previous analysis [French, 1993] as well. The ASP has one member (Adrian Kortlandt) who received his degree in the 1940s. The current analysis was performed at a similar point in the 2000s as French [1993] used for his analysis in the 1990s. The data from French [1993] indicate that substantially more members obtained their terminal degrees during the last decade (1990s) of analysis than had obtained their degrees during the preceding decade (1980s). One area of potential concern to the ASP is the relatively small increase in members receiving their degrees in the decade of the current analysis (2000s) compared to the preceding decade (1990s). The fact that a large number of members did not respond to this question may be magnifying this potentially negative trend, but this type of data should be monitored carefully for the next

TABLE V. Percentage of ASP Members by Employment Environment

Employment environment	1982	2002 <sup>a</sup>
College/university	51.5	46.5
Student	18.6	13.0
Primate center	9.0	5.4
Medical school	0.0	4.5
Private foundation	5.5	4.5
Government	4.5	5.7
Industry	2.9	6.7
Zoo	3.7	8.4
Retired	0.0	1.9
Unknown	4.3	0.0
Other	0.0	3.3
Total members	511	462/691

<sup>a</sup>Percentages are based on those 462 of the 691 members who specified an employment environment.

TABLE VI. Number of 2002 Members Who Received Their Terminal Degree by Sex and Decade

Decade	Males	Females	Total number of members
1940s	1	0	1
1950s	11	2	13
1960s	27	4	31
1970s	37	34	71
1980s	41	47	88
1990s	30	81	111
2000s	25	90	115
Unspecified			261
Total members			691

several years. Again, it would appear that an effort to recruit primatologists who received their terminal degrees within the last three or four years (the 2000s) is warranted. It seems likely that the cost of ASP dues (including a mandatory subscription to *AJP*) may be higher than many "younger" potential members think they can afford.

In 2002, ASP members received their mail in 44 different states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 31 foreign countries (see Table VII). Other than an increase in foreign members (primarily a function of the complimentary memberships provided to source-country primatologists who can not afford to pay dues), there do not appear to be many changes in the geographic distribution of ASP members from previous analyses [Dukelow et al., 1983; French, 1993]. Countries other than the United States with at least four ASP members include Brazil (10), Canada (22), China (four), India (eight), Indonesia (six), Kenya (four), Uganda (seven), and the United Kingdom (11). The eight states with National Primate Research Centers (California, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin) have 34.7% (n = 240) of ASP members living within their borders, but only 29 members list a National Primate Research Center as their institutional address. Clearly, a recruitment

TABLE VII. Percentage of 2002 ASP Members by Geographic Region

Geographic region	1982	1992	2002
Pacific Slope	22.3	19.9	18.1
Northeast	20.7	22.1	22.1
Southeast	18.0	19.3	18.1
North Central	13.5	15.6	12.7
Rockies/Great plains	14.3	14.3	12.4
Puerto Rico	1.4	1.2	0.7
Canada	1.6	1.8	3.2
Mexico	0.4	0.1	0.4
Other foreign	7.8	5.7	12.3
Africa <sup>a</sup>			21
Asia <sup>a</sup>			29
South America <sup>a</sup>			15
Europe <sup>a</sup>			18
Australia <sup>a</sup>			2
Total members	511	679 <sup>b</sup>	691

<sup>a</sup>Number of members, not percentage.

<sup>b</sup>According to Table II in French (1993).

drive aimed at increasing the number of ASP members among those interested in primatology who work at the National Primate Research Centers is called for.

### Additional Membership Information

A few other membership issues have arisen over the last decade that should be of interest to ASP members. In 1998, credit cards were accepted for dues payments for the first time, and in 1999, web-based dues payments became possible. These two factors related to membership "technology" resulted in the highest membership numbers on record (in 1998 there were 790 members, and in 1999 there were 816). In 2002, 399 members paid their dues using a credit card. Although many members continue to mail or fax hard copies of the renewal notices, just under 50% of the membership ( $n = 344$ ) paid their dues electronically at the ASP membership webpage in 2002.

Beginning in 2000, subscription to *AJP* became mandatory with membership in ASP. Dues rose accordingly from \$30/year to \$82/year for full members and from \$15/year to \$51/year for student members. Dues for retired members (\$15) did not change, as retired members were not required to subscribe to *AJP*. The pairing of ASP membership with *AJP* subscription was associated with an 8.7% decrease in membership numbers from 1999 to 2000 ( $n = 726$ ). Membership increased nicely in 2001 ( $n = 775$  [Schapiro, 2002]), but unfortunately, membership in 2002 ( $n = 691$ ) has again decreased substantially. This is all the more alarming when one realizes that in 2000 the ASP began to offer complimentary membership to source-country primatologists who can not afford to pay dues (ASP memberships are contributed by ASP, and *AJP* subscriptions are contributed by the editorial board of *AJP* and John Wiley & Sons). Since 2000, the number of complimentary members has gradually grown to 59, which represents an important contribution to the primatological community by the ASP membership. Although this contribution is positive, when one examines the decrease in the number of *dues-paying* members from 1999 to 2000, the decrease

is substantial. It is hoped that this is simply a temporary decrease and that in 2003 and 2004 membership numbers will once again range between 750 and 800.

In 1992, approximately 26% of ASP members made a contribution to the ASP Conservation Fund at the same time as they paid their annual dues. Although a smaller percentage of members (15.9%) made Conservation Fund contributions with their dues in 2002, the total amount (\$2,958) essentially matched that collected in 1992 (\$2,854).

Over 60% of ASP members ( $n=419$ ) in 2002 were also members of the International Primatological Society (IPS), a substantial increase over that percentage in 1992 (45.7%). The 2002 figure includes most of the 59 source-country primatologists who receive a complimentary ASP membership, as IPS membership is also complimentary for source-country primatologists who cannot afford to pay. Even so, ASP members still accounted for approximately 50% of IPS members in good standing in 2002.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The data presented in this membership analysis reveal that, as in previous analyses [Dukelow et al., 1983; French, 1993], the ASP is a diverse professional organization. Unfortunately, however, the growth patterns of the society are quite a bit different from what they were 10 years ago. While the proportion of students continues to increase (15.4% in 1982, 22.5% in 1992, and 32.1% in 2002), it is no longer growing appreciably. The large increase in active ASP members between 1996 and 1999 suggests that French [1993, p. 165] was correct when he predicted in 1992 that "some proportion of today's student members [will] become tomorrow's full members." It is similarly hoped that the high proportion of student members in 2002 bodes well for the continued growth of the ASP. The diversity of disciplinary origins of primatologists evident in both the 1982 and 1992 membership analyses has been maintained. Strong statements concerning changes in the proportions of specific disciplines, research interests, and employment environments among the membership must be tempered by the high percentage of members who did not provide this information. While the trends are reasonably similar to those reported in the previous analyses, it appears that the number of primate veterinarians in the ASP is decreasing. The society clearly could benefit from the experience and expertise of primate veterinarians, and efforts should be made for their recruitment.

The relationship between gender and "age" (decade of terminal degree) in the current data set is remarkably similar to that observed in 1992. Of the 2002 membership, 90 women and 25 men received their terminal degree in the 2000s. The figures in 1992 were 156 and 56, respectively (terminal degree in the 1990s). It is clear that the trend identified in 1992 [French, 1993] has continued, but given the large number of members who did not indicate their decade of terminal degree on the questionnaire, it is difficult to assess the implications of this trend on the overall number of members. It is also clear, however, that males account for the majority of ASP members who received their degrees prior to 1980, and that females comprise the vast majority of ASP members who received their degrees after 1980.

The geographic distribution of ASP members has remained fairly consistent throughout its history, with only a small increase in foreign members in the past few years. This is primarily due to the availability of complimentary memberships to source-country primatologists who cannot afford to pay dues. Since these complimentary memberships include a subscription to *AJP* as well, the ASP,

Wiley, and the *AJP* editorial board are making a substantial contribution to primatologists in habitat countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. While the eight states that contain National Primate Research Centers account for a substantial number of ASP members, relatively few members list the Primate Centers as their institutional affiliation.

Previous reports that analyzed a number of factors related to the membership of ASP [Dukelow et al., 1983; French, 1993] suggested that the diversity of ASP members has contributed to the growth and vitality of the society. This diversity and vitality still exist, but the growth of the ASP has slowed considerably. While this is not cause for panic at present, the decline in members since 2000 should stimulate considerable discussion about what can be done to reverse this trend. It would seem that a focused effort to recruit new ASP members is justified, and an examination of the current data identifies at least three target groups for recruitment: primate veterinarians, primatologists working at National Primate Research Centers, and primatologists who have received their terminal degree since 2000. The ASP has come a long way since 1977 and, as French [1993] predicted, it maintained sufficient momentum through the 1990s to move strongly into the first decade of the 21st century. It is important for the ASP to understand where it is now, and to take appropriate action to ensure that the society maintains its diversity and vitality in the future.

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