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CIEM Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

ICES INSIDE OUT

ICES Secretariat, Copenhagen 2011 No. 1

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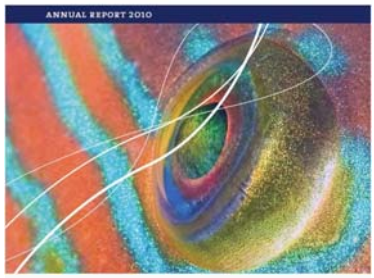

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Not just another day at the office

Data Officer Anna Osypchuk joins the crew of RV "Tridens" to learn first-hand how data are collected

Anna Osypchuk..

In February 2011, Anna Osypchuk left Copenhagen for an adventure in the North Sea. As data officer in ICES Data Centre, Anna has the tricky task of ensuring the quality and the flow of fisheries-related data received from national institutes, as well as handling fisheries-data requests from many user groups such as national institutes, ICES working groups, and other interested users, both from inside and outside the ICES network. The best way for her to understand how the information is gathered and processed is to see first-hand how data are collected. For a fisheries data manager, that means jumping aboard a trawler bound for the North Sea.

After a kind invitation from the Dutch research institute IMARES, Anna joined the Dutch RV "Tridens" for a week-long cruise of the first-quarter North Sea International Bottom Trawl Survey (NS-IBTS).

Sunrise on the North Sea.

My first cruise on a research vessel was a real adventure and a great opportunity to learn how fishing surveys are carried out, how the data are collected and stored, and to meet colleagues I only knew from e-mails.

Everything was new to me, and I was slightly apprehensive as I boarded the 73-metre research vessel. As a beginner, I felt a little insecure, not knowing what this movement of the ship meant or if it was supposed to sound like that. By the end of the week, however, I knew the ship inside out and felt perfectly safe. The accommodations were comfortable and complete. We even had an Internet connection!

In addition to the "Tridens" crew, there were six scientists from IMARES, including Henk Heessen and Ingeborg de Boois, who are active ICES members and well known in the ICES community.

Altogether, I spent four days sailing the southern North Sea. The survey could have been completed in one long journey, but it was broken up into shorter periods of activity to make it less strenuous on the personnel and less demanding of their personal lives.

Working days were long and busy. The crew started trawling around 8:00, directly after breakfast, and continued throughout the day. Still, there was time for relaxing and getting to know your shipmates.

RV "Tridens" docked at Scheveningen harbour in The Hague, the Netherlands.

We were lucky that the weather was good and the sea was unusually calm, creating a good working atmosphere and allowing us to experience the beautiful North Sea sunrises that can be seen at this time of year. Of course, the North Sea isn't always so cooperative. On a cruise the week before, the rolling sea caused the ship to jump suddenly. The dinner plates shifted exactly one place over, and the crew and scientists found themselves eating their neighbour's dinner.

Each survey has a regular chain of events. First, the survey is coordinated long in advance by the ICES International Bottom Trawl Survey Working Group (IBTSWG). Then, when all of the personnel have arrived, the ship has been provisioned, and everything is ready, we sail towards the statistical rectangle where the survey is to begin. Hauls are made, and it isn't long before we are busy sorting the catch by species, and then measuring length and weight, performing dissections for sex determination, and extracting otoliths for later age-reading. Typically, there are up to four catches per day at different times and places. Catches are limited by a fishing time of approximately 30 minutes. Our largest catch was over 20 tonnes of herring, which as I understood it, is unusual for such a short fishing period.

I asked Ingeborg de Boois whether the bottom-trawl gear impacts the habitat. She explained that the trawl is usually performed on sandy seabeds, and that kind of environment is more resilient and restores itself in three to four days, quicker than areas with, for example, coral growth. In the

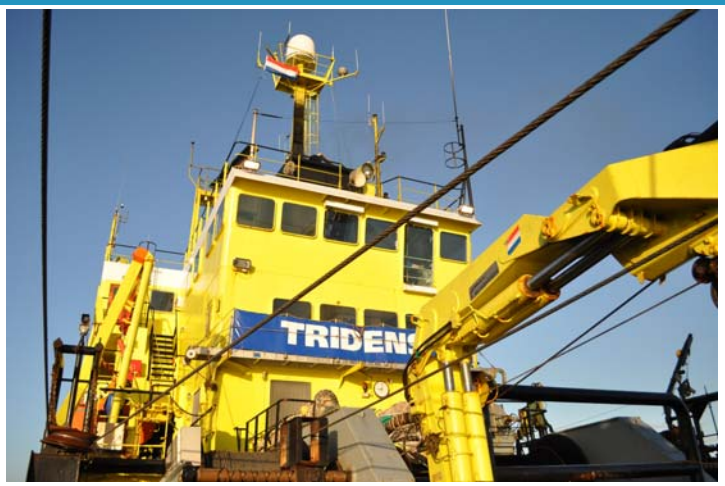
New catch is hauled aboard.

The catch on the sorting belt.

Anna sorts the catch by species.

evenings, approximately 30 minutes after sunset, part of the team performed a Methot Isaac–Kidd (MIK) midwater ring trawl, to sample fish larvae. The trawl's fine mesh allows it to snag small animals, which are not retained in larger trawl nets.

In the lab, I found it interesting to learn how to tag sharks for later release, how to distinguish various species (my ability to distinguish lemon sole, dab, plaice, and flounder grew as the week progressed), and how to extract herring and whiting otoliths for age readings.



RV "Tridens".

For some species, such as cod, taking otoliths is not as delicate a procedure as I thought. It was amusing to see Betty, a small woman from IMARES, wrestling a ten-kilo cod and cutting it up like a butcher. Whiting have quite large otoliths too, but it's harder to extract them from smaller species, such as herring and sprat.

Data entry begins as soon as sorting is finished. The measurements and other data are usually entered immediately in a dedicated computer program. The whole process goes incredibly fast because the people are professionals and really know what they are doing.

The trip was very interesting and useful for my day-to-day tasks in ICES Data Centre. My background in biology and environmental studies allows me to understand the data that I process. But because I handle data submissions from trawl surveys and communicate with data submitters about the data they are sending, it was enlightening to learn how these data are collected and to meet the data submitters in action. My experience at sea will also be useful for the planned development and hosting at ICES of an international database for fish eggs and larvae.

It was a pleasure to join the "Tridens" cruise and to observe the work of the Dutch team. Everybody – the ship's crew and IMARES staff – worked together efficiently and professionally, and were very friendly and hospitable to their landlubber guest. Actually, they encourage people to join the cruises as guests. Of course, you have to agree to their terms and be ready to participate actively, as I did. So, if you can't stand the smell of fish, it's better that you stay at home.

Would I do it again? Absolutely! Because every survey has its own design, and every ship has its own equipment that influences data-collection strategies, it would be interesting to explore how the catches are made and treated on other vessels, and to learn how the other surveys are designed. ICES data managers don't often get the chance to leave their desks, so I'm ready anytime to get out of the office and go to sea again.

More information about the history and technical background of the International Bottom Trawl Survey can be found here. More information about the survey's objectives, gear, and design can be found here.

An interview with Michael Sissenwine

Reflections on his term as the first Chair of ACOM

In 2008, ICES reorganized its Advisory Programme by establishing a single ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) with responsibility for all scientific advice. In that year, the Council elected former ICES President Michael Sissenwine as the first Chair of ACOM for a three-year term. Here, he reflects candidly on his term.

Michael Sissenwine.

It would seem that serving as ICES President is the pinnacle of anyone's ICES career. How did you end up as ACOM Chair after serving as President?

ICES began debating changes in the Advisory Programme during my term as President, but the plan was not ready for decision by the delegates until the next year. The proposed changes turned out to be controversial, and the Council was unable to finalize the plan. Joe Horwood, ICES President at the time, asked me to chair a special meeting to finalize the plan. Maybe I was too successful, because several delegates asked me if I would chair the new Committee.

At the time, there was a feeling that the Chair should be a full-time position. I was not willing to serve full time, and I felt making it a full-time position would be a mistake, because it would blur the line between being a member of the scientific community selected to lead his or her colleagues and being a member of the Secretariat staff. I also felt that making the position full time would limit the number of potential candidates, particularly mid-career scientists, who would have to put their research careers on hold if they served full time. I told the President that I would serve half time for the first year, if no one else was available.

I'm not sure of all of the dynamics that led to me being elected as the first Chair, but my guess is that delegates were nervous about the changes and they wanted to pick someone that was a known commodity. However, they wanted me to serve for three years to stabilize the situation. I agreed.

What was your first challenge as ACOM Chair?

There were two: lack of planning, and the frustration or dissatisfaction of several of the key people that had previously shown tremendous insight and leadership in planning the revitalization of the Advisory Programme. ICES normally thorough planning process for 2008 advice had fallen by the wayside because key people were distracted by the debate over proposed changes and because it was hard to plan without knowing what the Council would decide. There also seemed to be disagreement about who should lead the development of a work plan.

The lack of a plan would have been a problem for a normal year, but 2008 was unique because new processes needed to be invented as they were being implemented. The system was also coping with a major shift in workload from autumn to spring because the European Commission wanted most

fishery advice in the first half of the year. To make matters worse, nearly a year of debate, controversy, and delayed decisions had soured several key people on the situation. When I became Chair in March 2008, some advice was due within a few weeks. Everyone was working hard to honour commitments but they were not working as a team, and they were showing signs of frustration with each other.

I held several one-on-one meetings with key people. In each case, I tried to understand their frustrations and apprehension about the challenges we faced. Not only had ICES abandoned three well-established advisory committees with well-developed cultures and track records of delivering on time, it had made a decision to conduct most of its business by Web conference, using technology that was new to most of us. My message to everyone was that we would sink or swim as a team, and if we didn't work together we would certainly sink.

The positive response by Hans Lassen, Martin Pastoors, Mark Tasker, Paul Keizer, and the entire Secretariat was better than I could have imagined. We still had to suffer through the first year's inadequate planning, but we were all committed to surviving together. We also agreed that the Secretariat needed to take the lead in developing future work plans, which they have done since then.

For me, the moment of truth came about a month after I became Chair. I had my doubts if ICES could deliver a massive amount of fishery advice via a series of Web conferences in May and June. I proposed a contingency plan for a June ACOM meeting, just in case the Web conferences failed. Martin Pastoors convinced me that doing so would be a self-fulfilling prophecy: the Web conferences would fail. Hans and the other Vice Chairs agreed. I was nervous, but I trusted my colleagues. The Web conferences worked, and today, it is unthinkable for ICES advisory services to function without Web conferences.

Aside from "surviving", as you put it, what do you think were the major accomplishments of your term as Chair?

We did survive, which of course was necessary, but it was not enough. Several ACOM members and users of ICES advice have indicated that they think the quality of advice has improved. For one thing, the flexibility of Web conferences allows ACOM to schedule an occasional follow-up Web conference or to approve documents by e-mail, when it is not satisfied with draft advice. In the past, it was necessary to agree on something (for better or for worse) by the time that scheduled meetings ended and everyone was rushing to the airport. In addition, advice drafting groups (ADGs) probably have more time to develop advice from expert group reports than former advisory committees had. However, this depends on good participation in ADGs, which is sometimes a problem because of mounting workloads.

Another major accomplishment was actively managing the advisory service so that it could be more flexible and responsive to users' needs. Previously, the Management Committee for the Advisory Process (MCAP) managed the process. When I was President, I remember Paul Connolly as MCAP Chair being as busy as I was as President. At one Council meeting, he reported on seven meetings he had chaired during the year. However, the management authority of MCAP was never clear or strong. It made many recommendations to Council, which were too often discussed at length without

conclusion. It had some ability to manage the workloads of the three advisory committees, but I think they retained a lot of autonomy. MCAP did not have the authority to approve or disapprove advice. I think the ACOM leadership (the Chair and Vice Chairs) exercise much more managerial control than MCAP. We held approximately 20 Web conferences and several physical meetings a year to review progress, modify work plans, and to address new circumstances. I would communicate with the Secretariat almost daily. This was much more than talk and recommendations. We made decisions, sometimes to be confirmed by ACOM (which was almost always the case).

While actively managing the process, we invented new ways of responding to users' needs. Eventually, we formalized the processes in a document describing ICES portfolio of advisory services, which includes ACOM-approved advice, peer reviews, technical assistance, and project management. Without this flexible portfolio, ICES could not have engaged with the European Commission to develop technical assistance for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. There are several other examples of advisory services that are important for ICES Member Countries that could not have been undertaken without an empowered ACOM and with the ACOM leadership actively managing on an almost continuous basis.

As a result of feeling empowered, and armed with a portfolio of services that I could offer, I think we were able to be more responsive and generally improve our relationship with advice users and stakeholders. I know that all of the ACOM leadership and the Secretariat gave a high priority to communicating with, and being responsive to, users and stakeholders.

In some small way, I think that ACOM's achievements and obvious importance within ICES also served as a model for the restructuring of the science side of ICES and the establishment of SCICOM. I recall warning the former Consultative Committee (ConC) that they would become a poor stepchild to ACOM if the science side of ICES was not empowered like ACOM. I also pointed out that national representation was probably necessary to be truly empowered. Because most of my history with ICES concerned science, not advice, I did not want ACOM's success to indirectly diminish the importance of ICES science.

One reason for mentioning this interaction with ConC (and also SCICOM) is to highlight the important responsibilities that the ACOM and SCICOM Chairs have, which extend across all of ICES. They collaborate on several initiatives (such as initiatives on biodiversity, marine spatial planning, and a global review of stock assessment methods). They also play prominent roles at Bureau and Council meetings and are a resource often called on by the Secretariat for ideas and guidance.

Obviously, I feel good about what ICES advisory services achieved during my term as Chair. I would like to believe that I helped to steer the course, but the ACOM Vice Chairs and ACOM members and the Secretariat did the heavy lifting.

Do you think that the reformwas necessary and successful?

The former process was a good process for its time, but more flexibility is required today. Flexibility requires a continuously empowered management. I think the revitalization has been both successful and necessary. There was a Council working group last year that reviewed the transition of advisory services. The report indicates progress had been made on most of the objectives.

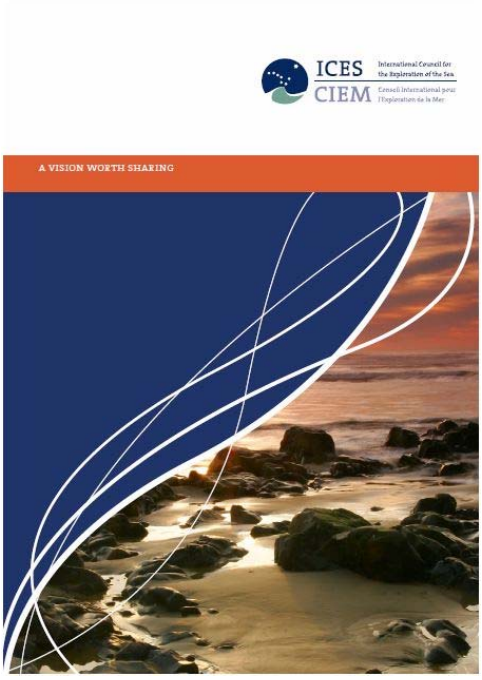
One area that remains a problem is the workload, and this problem may get worse as several Member Countries are forced to tighten their belts because of budget problems. Ironically, the success of revitalizing advisory services has exacerbated the workload problem. ICES has more requests for advisory services than ever before because it has demonstrated that it is relevant, responsive, sound, and credible, as it should be, in keeping with the ICES vision (see *ICES Strategic Plan*).

The challenge is to manage this workload better in the future. I don't think the former process would have been able to cope with the workload as well as the revitalized process. It probably would not have had to, because I think ICES customers would have gradually abandoned ICES if it had not been able to respond to their needs.

You seem very positive about the situation. Is it smooth sailing in future?

I think "navigating trouble waters" is more appropriate than smooth sailing. There are several challenges. First and foremost is the workload. The Bureau and the Council are considering a business model for ICES. As ACOM Chair, I also proposed a business model for advisory services. I think it is critical that ICES puts its house in order with respect to cost recovery for advisory services and support for the scientists that are the source of advice.

In general, the fishery management commissions pay ICES direct costs (not overhead) for services, but they depend on the good will of scientists (and Member Country laboratories), whose voluntary efforts support the process. There is also an unwritten understanding that Member Countries are entitled to advisory services without compensating ICES above their normal annual contributions. Such requests are more frequent and costly.



ICES Strategic Plan.

A key issue is volunteerism by the scientists behind the advice. When almost all scientists were from member-country laboratories, and these Member Countries shared an interest in most advisory services, volunteerism worked. Today, many of the scientists that are needed to produce advice are not from member-country laboratories (e.g. from universities), and today's funding arrangements within member-country laboratories may not support participation in advisory processes. Furthermore, there are many requests for advisory services that are only important for one or a few Member Countries.

Another issue is the role of ACOM when it comes to advisory services for non-fisheries clients. Fisheries clients want advice approved by ACOM so that they can be confident that Member Countries will stand behind the advice. Non-fishery-management commissions want to benefit from the scientific expertise of the ICES scientific community, but they may have their own processes to ensure the buy-in of their members.

The ICES advisory model is based largely on a tried-and-true

model for fishery advice. ICES needs to recognize that there are different cultures for non-fishery issues, and it needs to decide on the best way to make sound and relevant scientific information available to anyone or any organization that can use it to support sound science-based decisions.

ICES faces several other challenges. I think it needs to do more to open up expert groups to observers, but this is a complicated issue, and when this matter has been debated in the past, some delegates have strongly disagreed. Other challenges include deciding how best to respond to some clients that desire advice on the economic impacts of management options integrated with biological advice; making benchmark workshops more efficient and effective; further developing MSY-based advice; modernization of information technology used to produce advice and quality assure information; and improved quality assurance protocols in general.

I'm sure these challenges will be addressed by an external review of advisory services, planned during the next year or so. Fortunately, the new ACOM Chair, Jean-Jacques Maguire, the Vice Chairs, Manuela Azevedo, Eugene Nixon, Carl O'Brien, and Han Lindeboom, and the Head of the Advisory Programme, Poul Degnbol, are a very experienced and competent team. I'm sure they will overcome the challenges and safely navigate to calmer waters.

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A history of ICES, 1999–2009

Recounting dramatic changes

In her Master's thesis recently delivered to the Stockholm Resilience Centre, Kari Stange investigates the dynamics of the changes that occurred in ICES over a ten-year period. The first-year course work in this interdisciplinary research environment triggered her interest in science and policy issues and raised questions about how the ecosystem approach can be integrated at different levels.

It became apparent to Stange that the transition to a more holistic management paradigm for the marine environment would require new ways of working for the various actors operating at the science–policy interface. Experiences from her participation in an ICES working group in the mid-1990s led her to analyse ICES as a case study of change in an organization that functions as an international network.

During the period 1999 to 2009, the ICES Advisory and Science Programmes underwent major reforms. The ICES Secretariat was reorganized, and strategic planning processes led to new guiding documents.

Kari Stange.

The study of this history resulted in her thesis "Towards a More Holistic Marine Management Paradigm: Ten Years of ICES Changes to Meet Tomorrow's Need for Science and Advice". In describing and analysing these organizational changes, Stange used interviews, observations, and document review to tell her story.

Although the ecosystem approach was an important backdrop to the reforms, the study found that it was not a dominant driver behind the changes. The major drivers were found to be the need to improve efficiency and a desire for better integration between different organizational components. The international network structure of ICES contributed to the special dynamics that accompanied the change.

The full text of Stange's thesis can be accessed here.

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Training course registration deadlines are fast approaching

Don't miss out

ICES Training courses aim to build capacity in the ICES network by offering courses led by high-profile scientists and instructors on relevant marine science topics.

Training course participants, October 2010.

Courses planned for Spring 2011:

Stock Assessment (Advanced).
30 May–3 June 2011 at ICES Secretariat. Read more. Registration deadline 8 April 2011.

Fishery Management to meet biodiversity conservation needs.
7–9 June 2011 at ICES Secretariat. Read more. Registration deadline 23 April 2011.

Stock Assessment (Introduction).
20–24 June 2011 at ICES Secretariat. Read more. Registration deadline 29 April 2011.

New!

Trawl Survey Design and Evaluation. 10–14 October 2011 at ICES Secretariat. Read more. Registration deadline 26 August 2011.

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ICES Symposia 2011

Five international marine science symposia offered this year

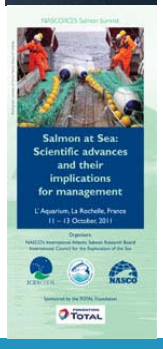
Symposia are an important part of the ICES work programme, not least because they broaden the diversity of scientists who participate in ICES activities. ICES symposia aim to cover stimulating topics that are fundamental to the science components of the *ICES Strategic Plan*, including understanding the physical, chemical, and biological functioning of marine ecosystems, understanding and quantifying human impacts on marine ecosystems, including living marine resources, and evaluating options for sustainable marine-related industries, particularly fishing and mariculture.

5th International Zooplankton Production Symposium will be held 14–18 March 2011, in Pucón, Chile. Conveners: Ruben Escribano (Chile), Delphine Bonnet (France), and Julie Keister (USA).

ICES/NAFO Symposium on the Variability of the North Atlantic and its Marine Ecosystems during 2000–2009 will be held 10–12 May 2011, in Santander, Spain. Conveners: Sarah Hughes (UK), Alicia Lavin (Spain), Stephen Dye (UK), Hedinn Valdimarsson (Iceland), and Glenn Nolan (Ireland).

Symposium on Comparative Studies of Climate Effects on Polar and Sub-polar Ocean Ecosystems: Progress in Observation and Prediction will be held 22–26 May 2011, in Seattle, Washington, USA. Conveners: George Hunt (USA), Ólafur Astthórsson (Iceland), and Michio Kishi (Japan).

2nd International Symposium on Integrated Coastal Zone Management will be held 3–7 July 2011, in Arendal, Norway. Convener: Erlend Moksness (Norway).



ICES/NASCO Symposium on Salmon at Sea: Scientific Advances and their Implications for Management will be held 11–13 October 2011 in La Rochelle, France. Conveners: Lars Petter Hansen (Norway), David Reddin (Canada), and Malcolm Windsor (UK).

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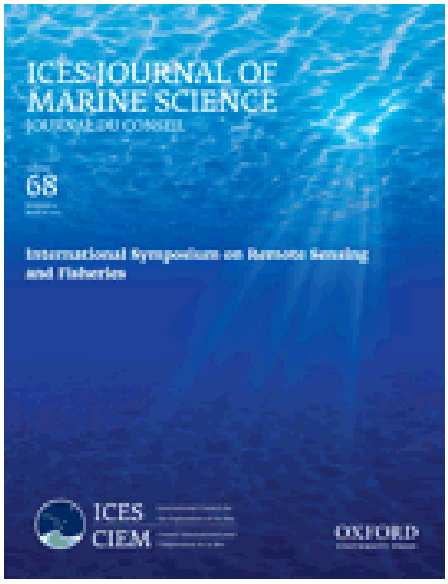
Opportunities at ICES

Posts advertised on the ICES website



The following opportunities are currently being advertised on the ICES website. More information can be found by following the links provided below.

General Secretary

Applications are invited for the post of General Secretary of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The post, which will become vacant on 31 January 2012, is based at the Council's headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark. Application deadline is 31 March 2011. Further information is available here.

Editor-in-Chief for IJMS

Applications are invited for the post of Editor-in-Chief of *ICES Journal of Marine Science*. Application deadline is 9 May 2011. A full job description and information on how to apply is available here.

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Grammar Slammer

William Anthony asks, will I be arrested if I end a sentence with a preposition?

On a recent trip to Oxford, home to the publisher of *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, I stopped a stranger and asked, "Could you please tell me where the library is at?" My highly educated interviewee responded sniffily, "We at Oxford never end our sentences with a preposition", to which I responded, "All right then. Could you please tell me where the library is at, chump?"

Actually, only a chump would ask where something is *at*. (Useful tip: never end a sentence with *at*.) But there are other instances in which following the prohibition against ending a sentence with a preposition makes us look equally foolish. ("For what did you hit me?") And then there is scientific writing.

Strangely, all of this teeth grinding comes from the misapprehension that English is Latin.

In the nineteenth century, grammar books were often prescriptive, that is, they provided a series of *do*s and *don't*s for people wishing to speak English like the upper classes. Mistakenly presuming that "good" grammar emulated Latin grammar, they demanded that prepositions be placed immediately after the noun *to* which they referred. Noun followed immediately by *preposition*.

For example, one should not say "the prescriptivist Bill clashed with", but rather "the prescriptivist *with* whom Bill clashed"; not "the rule Bill laughed at", but "the rule *at* which Bill laughed".

Winston Churchill, no chump himself when it came to using the English language, mocked the self-importance of prescriptivists with his famous rejoinder, "That is the sort of arrant pedantry *up* with which I will not put".

It isn't sensible to call a construction grammatically incorrect when fully competent speakers of the standard language use it all the time. So, freed from the shackles of a rule based on a mistaken notion, you, gentle reader, must be sensitive to the style – formal or informal – and the regional usages required by the situation, and let the language flow accordingly.

Unfortunately, scientific writing doesn't share this laissez-faire attitude. Rather than trying to convince an editor of your qualifications for re-inventing the wheel, it is better to write formally and avoid delivering sentences with stranded prepositions.

If your struggle to avoid orphaned prepositions ends in the defeat of absurdity ("That was the cruise on which I went"), try rewriting.

Place the prepositional phrase before the noun. "What do you attribute this trend to?" becomes "To what do you attribute this trend?" It sounds slightly stuffy when spoken, but an editor won't be able to touch you with a ten-foot red pen.

Find ways of avoiding a preposition altogether. Change our earlier example ("For what did you hit me?") to "Why did you hit me?" Or instead of stating at great length and with apparent accuracy "I went into the field and found ten intertidal fish to take samples from", curtail the sentence by writing "I went into the field and sampled ten intertidal fish".

Without knowing where to place our prepositions, we're all chumps at Oxford.*

** "A Chump at Oxford", is a classic Laurel and Hardy film. Released in 1940, it was the penultimate Laurel and Hardy film made at Hal Roach studios.*

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