

MARS fact sheet #05

Freshwater Blog - a tool for wide range dissemination

With the start of MARS one of the first tasks was to transition the blog from the BioFresh project to the MARS project, involving a renaming and rebranding of the site and associated social media. Since then, one blog post on freshwater science, policy or conservation was published on a weekly basis. The blog is an excellent tool for a wide spread dissemination and communication and to reach a large group of readers all over the world on a regular base.

Editorial framework

We have assigned writing the blog posts to a native speaker with biological and journalistic background. He has devised an editorial framework for publishing, which effectively targets different audiences relevant to the work of MARS, comprising four broad types of posts. This framework ensures that there is a diverse, topical and engaging range of material on the blog at all times, which can be accessed and enjoyed by a variety of different target audiences.

1. MARS and related projects

These are posts that directly communicate and profile the work of the MARS project and individual scientists; or of related EU projects such as DESSIN and GLOBAQUA. Such posts provide an in-depth and engaging look 'behind the scenes' of the project, and provide simple explanations of the project's key (and often complex) focuses. Some examples:

[The MARS 'Meet the Team' Series](#)

[Reflecting on the Symposium for European Freshwater Sciences in Geneva](#)

[Introducing the MARS river and lake experiments](#)

2. New and relevant freshwater science and policy

These are posts that offer analysis and invite debate on new and important scientific publications and policy topics relating to freshwaters. They are designed to attract an interested audience of freshwater scientists, water managers and policy makers. Some examples:

[Microplastic pollution: an emerging freshwater stressor](#)

[Underwater sound pollution leaves juvenile European eels vulnerable to predators](#)

[Why are global crayfish populations declining?](#)

3. Institutional networking

These are posts that intentionally engage with other institutions working on freshwater topics: partly as a means of keeping the blog populated with current, cutting-edge information; and perhaps more importantly as a means of networking with important individuals and institutions, and ensuring the Freshwater Blog and MARS links are circulated around their networks, and in so doing raising the visibility of the MARS project. Examples:

[WWF Living Planet Report suggests 76% decline in freshwater biodiversity globally since 1970](#)

[Do anglers make good conservationists? An interview with Mark Lloyd of the Angling Trust](#)

4. General public topics

These are posts on topics that are likely to have wide public appeal. These are always targeted to subtly introduce MARS topics (e.g. multiple stress, ecosystem services) but within a wider topic that is easy to engage with, and has the potential to be widely shared. Examples:

[Of Soil and Water: outdoor swimming in a naturally filtered urban pool](#)

[Beneath the Waterline: an interview with underwater filmmaker Jack Perks](#)

MARS fact sheet #05

Freshwaterblog

In 2014, 52 blog posts were published from February onwards ([archive 2014](#)), in 2015, 30 blog posts have been published to the end of July ([archive 2015](#)).

Within MARS more than 90.000 visitors have been to the blog website (220.000 visitors in total since the blog is online). In 2015 the number of visitors per month was growing from 4.000 to 12.600 (Jan-June). Readers are coming from all over the world.

MARS social media communications metrics

Aside the blog we use all social media channels for dissemination and communication.

Twitter

The [Freshwater Blog twitter](#) is predominantly followed by water scientists, conservationists, managers and other professionals around the world, and has 1.730 followers who receive each post.

LinkedIn

The [Freshwater Blog LinkedIn group](#) has 242 members, largely drawn from water scientists, researchers and managers. It is used to post updates from the Freshwater Blog, and to facilitate discussions amongst members.

Soundcloud

The [Freshwater Blog Soundcloud page](#) is used to host the project podcasts, which users can then stream, embed and download. The first MARS podcast, an interview with MARS scientist Steve Ormerod, has been streamed 262 times.

Facebook

The [Freshwater Blog facebook page](#) was transitioned from the BioFresh Cabinet of Freshwater Curiosities page, and has 284 followers. It is used to share Freshwater Blog posts, and to facilitate discussion amongst an audience of predominantly freshwater and conservation students, researchers and professionals.

MARS fact sheet #05

Figures

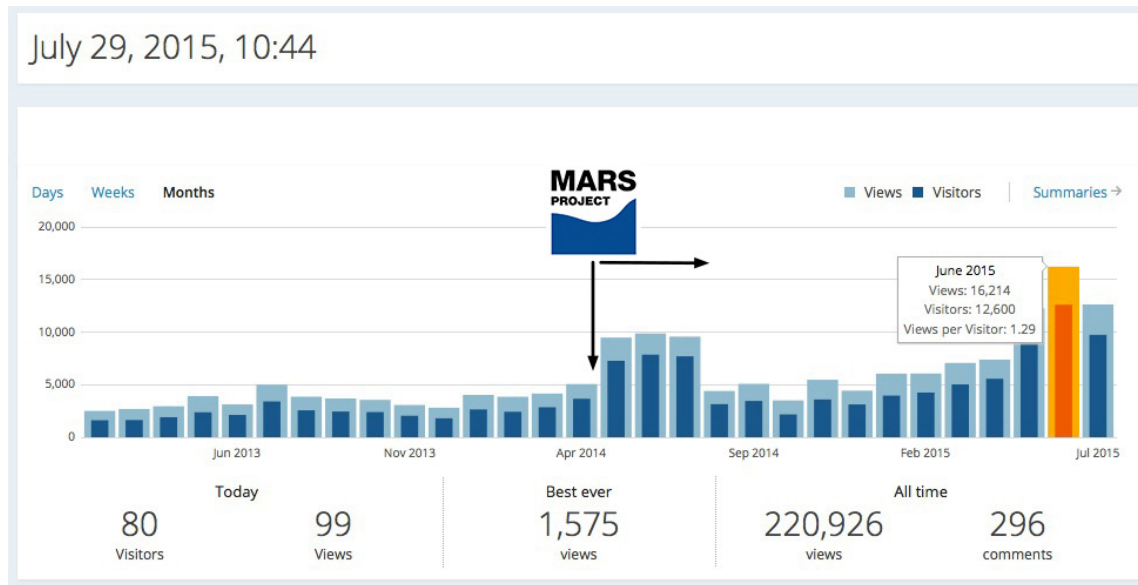


Figure 1: Blog statistics. Development of readers.

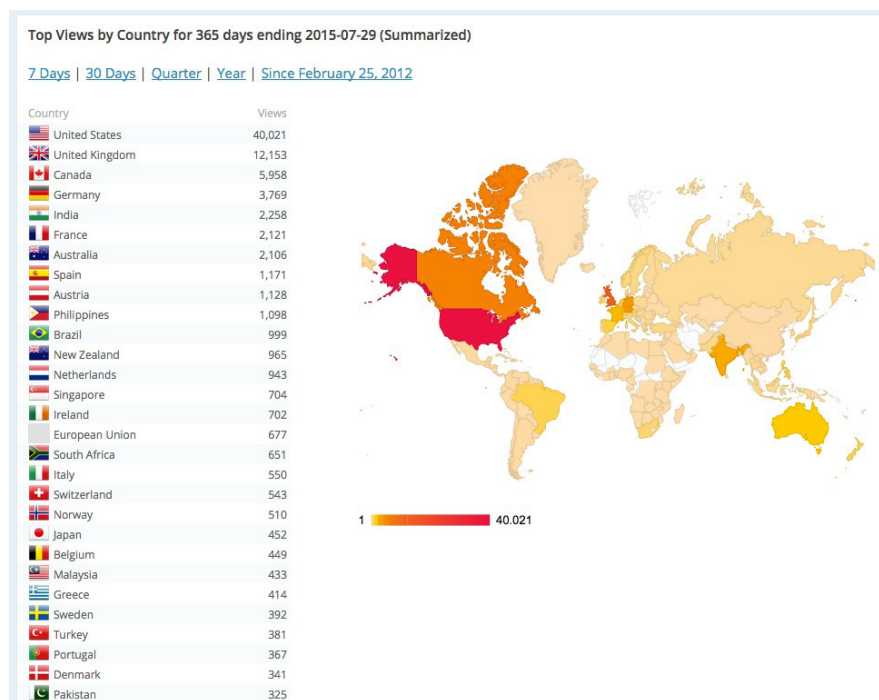


Figure 2: Blog statistics. Readers' origins.