Authorship Patterns in Research Papers

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Introduction

Scientometric studies typically investigate the primary literature, but much applied research and science advice is documented in grey literature. We check whether similar patterns are observed in agency publications and propose potential mechanisms.

Data

GreyFish Dataset with 14,000 agency documents, and growing. For this poster, we focus on research papers:

- 791 from Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- 1,193 from National Marine Fisheries Service (US)
- 3,753 from Fisheries and Oceans Canada

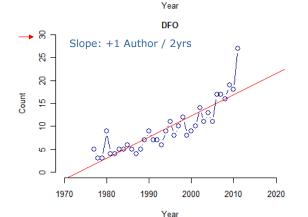
Sources, assumptions, metadata, R scripts and more at www.solv.ca/GreyFish

ADFG Slope: +1 Author / 4yrs Slope: +1 Author / 4yrs Slope: +1 Author / 4yrs

2020

2010

Pushing the Envelope: Max(Authors)



1990

2000

1970

1980

Observations

1970

• Same pattern in all 3 agencies

1990

Year

2000

2010

2020

• Steady increase

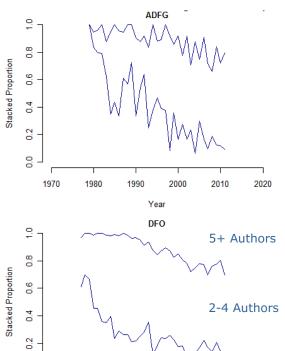
1980

• No sign of peaking

Questions

- Proxy for scope?
- Proxy for controversy? (if outliers)

Shifting Baselines: Prop(Multiple Authors)



0.0

8

80

Count 40 1970

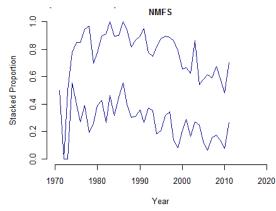
1980

1990

Year

ADFG

2000



Observations

- Same pattern in all 3 agencies
- Demise of the single author!
- Bulk of work by 2-4 authors
- 5+ author reports encroaching

Questions

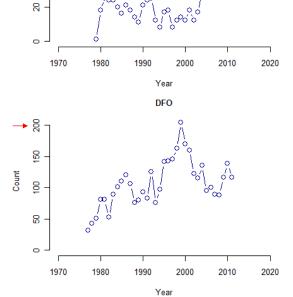
- Proxy for scope?
- Tech reducing cost of collaborations?

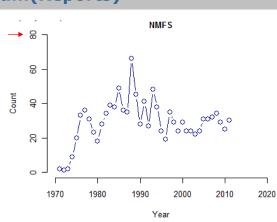
Total Output: Num(Reports)

1 Author

2020

2010





Observations

Variety of patterns

Questions

- Recruitment pulses?
- Funding or staffing changes?
- Competing for recruits?
- Backlog in web-publishing?

Conclusions

Mechanisms to Explore

- **Reports R** ∝ **Scientists S** (agency staffing, funding for collaborations)
- **S/R** ∝ **Scope** (Do broader questions result in more authors?)
- **R/S** ∝ **1/scope** (Does expanding scope reduce productivity per author?)
- **R/S** ∝ **1/seniority** (Do scientists shift from grey lit to 1° lit over time?)
- **S/R** ∝ **Tech** (Do computers and telecom facilitate collaborations?)
- **R** ∝ **Tech** (Does computer-technology improve and/or increase output?)

Next Steps

- Formalize a process-based taxonomy of grey literature
- Find collaborators from different agencies
- Expand/proof the data sets
- Start fitting models!