

The Southern California Association of Marine Invertebrate Taxonomists (SCAMIT) was founded as a result of SCCWRP's original Taxonomy Standardization group, which was beginning to suffer from a lack of interest. SCAMIT was instituted in 1982 through a cooperative effort and renewed interest of taxonomists from SCCWRP, sanitation districts from Oxnard to San Diego, and local consulting agencies. Its primary functions are to develop a regionally standardized taxonomy and to disseminate taxonomic information.



SCAMIT and SCECS: An Overview

Currently, SCAMIT has over 100 members throughout the world, including Mexico, Canada, Belgium, Great Britain, the West Indies, and the USSR. Many members are taxonomists by trade and study the local fauna for laboratories (such as SCCWRP) and consulting agencies, while others teach at universities or work in museums.

Each month, members meet at the Cabrillo Marine Museum in San Pedro, where the SCAMIT library of taxonomic literature and comprehensive listing of local marine invertebrates are stored for the members' use. Different taxonomic groups are chosen for study at each meeting, and representative species from that group are described on a voucher sheet and preserved in a reference collection. The monthly meetings give the members an opportunity to

discuss and resolve problems in systematics, which ensures a standardized taxonomy. Members also receive a monthly newsletter that not only provides information concerning the meetings but also contains taxonomic descriptions, keys, and bibliographies.

In addition, SCAMIT hosts special workshops and lectures that are pertinent to taxonomic and ecological issues. Dr. J. L. Barnard is a world authority on gammaridian amphipods and has shared his expertise with SCAMIT at three workshops to date. SCAMIT members bring in specimens they are having prob-

lems assigning to a specific taxon and with the help of Dr. Barnard one of three things may be concluded.

- (1) The specimen is a new undescribed species which needs to be described in the literature.
- (2) The specimen is a currently described valid species.
- (3) The systematics of that particular group is confused and needs more work.

At the workshops, SCAMIT members are able to work out taxonomic problems at a much accelerated pace than at their regular meetings.



The Southern California Environmental Chemists Society (SCECS) was founded in 1985 by a group of chemists from municipal wastewater monitoring laboratories and SCCWRP. The purpose in forming SCECS was to promote communication among chemists who analyze environmental samples and to move toward standardizing analytical procedures. Up to this point, the diverse analytical methods and strategies used in monitoring and research programs were not always comparable. Also, it was apparent that the California State Water Resources Control Board and the Environmental Protection Agency would soon be requiring these laboratories to develop analytical capabilities for new classes of compounds (e.g., priority pollutants). Since most members had little experience doing this, it was felt that SCECS

would help tremendously to provide an opportunity to interact with chemists who were developing similar methods. Thus the objectives of SCECS are to exchange scientific information on advances in analytical methodology, applications, and findings, and in general, to act as a medium for the improvement of chemical procedures and laboratory efficiency.

An important part of any chemistry program is quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) and indeed a considerable amount of time and money is spent on QA/QC by analytical laboratories. SCECS also recognized this as an area in which its members needed to have a means of exchanging ideas and improving their understanding of how to manage a high-caliber QA/QC program. Laboratory managers have supported this

need and consider time spent at SCECS meetings as an integral part of their QA/QC program; thus SCECS devotes much effort to this subject.

As of May 1988, SCECS had approximately 130 members including chemists from ocean monitoring laboratories and SCCWRP, as well as chemists and biologists from several private laboratories and other government agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Department of Agriculture.

Meetings are held every two months and the location rotates to different host laboratories so that members get a chance to experience laboratories other than their own. At each of these meetings specific subjects related to analytical techniques are discussed so that problems can be solved and helpful hints may be shared. Some of SCECS' goals include developing an ongoing intercalibration program, a standard reference material program, and a handbook of systematic analytical methods. SCECS members are currently compiling a manual for sample collection techniques which will aid those who often are not chemists themselves, but who are collecting environmental samples for chemical analysis.

SCAMIT and SCECS assure QA/QC for SCCWRP by integrating the thoughts of many scientists with common goals: standardization of their specialized fields, refinement or introduction of methods, and solutions to problems. Involvement with these organizations leads to improvement of SCCWRP methods by assuring constant refinement of procedures and review of methods used by other organizations. These two vital groups promote standardization of procedures among agencies conducting monitoring and research in their respective fields.

Readers interested in knowing more about SCECS or in joining the Society may contact the SCECS President, Richard Gossett, at (213) 435-7071. For information about SCAMIT membership, please contact Ann Martin at (213) 322-3131 (ext. 317).