**Behavioural Ecology workshop**

February 8th and 10th, 2017

What are your experiences with database searches / finding journal articles over the past few years?

**Quote of the Day**

“Poor information on patch quality leaves the forager spending too much time in poor patches

and too little time in rich patches.”

From: Brown JS. 2009. Foraging behavior. In: Carpenter SR, Levin SA, editors. 2009. *The Princeton*

*Guide to Ecology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 55.

**Biology Subject guide** – <http://dal.ca.libguides.com/biology>

The main page of the guide provides a list of databases, each of which includes its own type of content (eg. references to articles from a given set of journals; references to journals, reports and book chapters, etc…). If you need to do a comprehensive search for a biological topic, it’s best to use Biological Abstracts. Always try a couple of other databases to see if any “hidden gems” appear in the results.

**Biological Abstracts**

Most comprehensive database for biological research articles. Provides major concepts and a controlled vocabulary to help refine the search.

Sample search to identify articles about social foraging:

“social forag\*” OR “group forag\*”

506 results but some irrelevant

Note the Major Concepts (that serve as subject headings) and Taxonomic terms

Select Major Concept: Behavior >> Refine >> 417 results

Result #9: “Activity patterns and use of night roosts… bats”

Click on the article title and scroll down to view:

Taxonomic Data: Chiroptera

Now modify the Search by adding: Chiroptera as Taxonomic Data

17 results – all about bats and their behaviour

Note the Times Cited column to the right of the results list. The articles listed there may be of interest to you as well.

Hands-on work

Back to Biology subject guide

**Scopus database**

This is amultidisciplinary database that covers science, social science and humanities. It also tries to include every journal published from around the world, as well as references to some books or book chapters.

“social forag\*” OR “group forag\*”

754 results

The first article on the results list discusses “dilution effect” – by Guy Beauchamp.

If you’re unfamiliar with a topic, it’s best to read some background information, some of which could be in the form of literature review articles. On the Scopus Results screen, on the left-hand panel, click on:

Document Type > Reviews

17 results = literature reviews

The “Subject Areas” in this database (see left-hand panel) are very broad categories. They’re not as specific as in Biological Abstracts. However some of the “Keywords” may help you to modify the search.

For example: “Social foraging” (130 results) or “Bat” (11 results)

Back to the Search screen.

Let’s add another concept to the original search.

To the right of the search box, click on the + symbol to add another search line/box.

On the second search line/box, type in:

Bats OR chiropter\*

19 results >> There are 19 items about social foraging and bats.

Note: #10 is actually a book: *Bats: Biology, Behavior and Conservation*

Back to search screen.

From search line/box, remove: Bats OR chiropter\*

On the first search line/box, change “Article title, Abstract, Keywords” to “Title”.

194 results – all of which contain “social forager” or “social foraging” in the title.

Hands-on

**RefWorks** is a citation manager that can help you to collect references that you find in databases and then easily prepare a reference list for your paper. (See separate handout and more information at: https://libraries.dal.ca/research/refworks.html)