

Dear Nick

Thanks for your e-mail, regarding the recent Scarce Migrants report, and the Honey-buzzard graph in particular. You're right, the omission of the two influx years was not related to any presentational problems, and we have used the method you suggest (a broken column with the actual value at the top) before now.

The approach used was an attempt to illustrate (rather than justify statistically) a possible pattern of records in 'normal' years. In my view, this was made sufficiently clear in the report – both the text and the figure caption state that the two big influx years were omitted from that figure, although you can find the totals for those two years in the summary box at the top – so I don't honestly feel that even the casual reader would have been misled. In terms of trying to explain, or at least describe, the large influxes in the two years concerned, we have covered these pretty thoroughly in BB in the past.

As an editor, I have encouraged the authors of the SM report (which is a report, not a scientific paper) to vary the presentation of the basic stats where possible – otherwise the report can become unduly repetitive from year to year. Hence, the full bar chart showing the annual totals was presented two years ago (in the report for 2004-07), while last year (covering 2008-10) two different graphics were used. Both Steve White and Pete Fraser have worked really hard in the last couple of years to bring the feature back up to date, and I am hugely grateful for their efforts.

Nonetheless, we'll undertake to include a full, unadulterated bar chart of the annual totals in the report covering either 2013 or 2014.

With best wishes,

Roger

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