

EDITORIAL

1994 has been an excellent year for THE RAFFLES BULLETIN OF ZOOLOGY. We have issued four numbers. This includes two special numbers, one consolidating the contents of all the papers published in the RAFFLES BULLETIN and its predecessors since it was first started in 1934; and a monograph on the Philippine Thysanoptera.

Over the year, the RAFFLES BULLETIN has also been indexed by several organisations, most notably CURRENT CONTENTS: AGRICULTURE & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES. Contributors can now be assured that their papers get wide and rapid international coverage and exposure. We hope that this exposure will give Southeast Asian zoology a significant boost.

The increasing number of papers submitted, as well as the increased costs of publishing the RAFFLES BULLETIN has caused some problems, especially since the journal is published by a public institution and there is no full time editorial or publication staff. The editorial policy of the journal is to have accepted papers published in under a year, and preferably within six months. This speed is important, as all too often nowadays, the lag time between acceptance and publication for major journals averages a year and is frequently much longer. The average number of pages per number over the last few multi-paper issues has also increased substantially since the earlier ones, and this is partly due to the number and increased length of papers. Postal costs for shipping out the numbers, reprints, and sending manuscripts and proofs to referees and authors respectively have also increased substantially over the years. To maintain the high standards of the journal and assure speed of publication, the editorial board has decided to make a few changes to the journal to help balance the rather stretched budget.

From mid-1995, the RAFFLES BULLETIN will no longer provide 50 free reprints. The cost of reprints, which will still be quite reasonable, will now cover not only the printing, but postal and registration costs as well. It has been a difficult decision to make, but the alternative would have been to levy page charges or reduce the frequency of the journal. Both these alternatives, we felt, were less favourable to actively publishing systematists and ecologists. For contributors with minimal or no institutional support, the policy of charging for reprints would not pose a serious problem as the costs are not substantial in any case, and they can always make copies themselves. For authors who have papers without photographs (as in the majority), they can make photocopies for distribution, and the journal is waiving the copyright to the authors. As with past practice, the journal will still send two free reprints to the authors by airmail once their paper is out. This change in regards to reprints will only be implemented from mid-1995. All papers which have already been accepted or which are now under review however, will not be affected.

The journal will now also levy mandatory page charges for papers which exceed 20 printed pages. At present, we encourage authors to help pay for excessively long papers, but we have not made it mandatory. In fact, the only mandatory cost for contributors currently is for colour pages. The page charges however, will still be minimal. Authors with long manuscripts should write to the executive editorial board for advice.

The success of the RAFFLES BULLETIN has certainly been greatly facilitated by the many referees who have helped us review the many papers submitted. Refereeing papers is a very onerous task under any circumstance, but it is often a necessary evil to maintain some degree of editorial objectivity and publication quality. The editorial board has also been greatly

helped by its ever vigilant and diligent publications editor, who labours on the journal on much of his free time. We also take the opportunity to welcome Dr David Lane of the National University of Singapore into the executive editorial board. Dr Lane, who works on echinoderms and bats, has helped us on many occasions over the years and we are glad to have his continued services! We also welcome Professor Yong Hoi Sen of the University of Malaya to our editorial board. Professor Yong has published extensively on a wide variety of topics, ranging from mammals to insects and parasites, and has helped the board review many papers over the years.

Dr Peter K. L. Ng
Managing Editor