

EDITORIAL

Until 1970, one of the key centres of zoological research in Southeast Asia was the Raffles Museum, later renamed the National Museum of Singapore. It was the policy then that regular annual reports be issued. These reports not only recorded the finances, number of visitors, books received etc., they also documented the donors of specimens, scientists who visited, groups studied, specimen acquisitions and exchanges, and occasionally, even catalogues. As such, these reports have proved invaluable in tracing older records and the history of key specimens. After 1972, with the bulk of the zoological specimens transferred to the Department of Zoology of the then University of Singapore, it became known as the Zoological Reference Collection (ZRC). It retained its name even after the merger of the University of Singapore with the Nanyang University to form the National University of Singapore. Until today, some scientists who refer to the collection still use the defunct acronym of the National Museum of Singapore - NMS.

With the establishment of a permanent and modern facility for the ZRC in 1988, the state and future of the invaluable specimens inherited from the Raffles Museum is assured. It is thus only proper that the useful practice of issuing annual reports be reinstated. In this issue of the RAFFLES BULLETIN OF ZOOLOGY, a special 17 year report (1972 to 1989) for the ZRC is presented by its scientific officer, Mrs. C. M. Yang. With the help of a few dedicated technicians, she has carefully and faithfully managed and maintained the collection since 1972. In the coming years, biennial reports (based on the calendar year) will be issued. It is hoped that these reports will prove as useful as their predecessors. It will also give the collection an opportunity to acknowledge the kindness and generosity of public donors, foreign museums and professional scientists.

In this issue, 10 scientific papers and notes are included together with the ZRC report. The editorial board has also been revamped. The main editorial board has been expanded to include more experts to provide an international scope to the journal. Although the RAFFLES BULLETIN deals essentially with Southeast Asian material, the contributors come from various parts of the world, and the journal is effectively international. In the current issue for example, we have Robert Inger, John Polhemus, Raymond Manning and Marjorie Reaka-Kudla from the United States, Maurice Kottelat from the Federal Republic of Germany, Satish Choy from Brunei, and Susan Lim and Tan Fui Lan from Malaysia. Papers are sent for review by persons competent with the topic to ensure its quality by international standards.

It is also the journal's intention to review useful books pertaining to systematic and ecological zoology in this region. Two very important ichthyological works are reviewed in this issue.

The next issue of the RAFFLES BULLETIN OF ZOOLOGY will be a special one, commemorating 40 years of the Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore.

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