

EDITORIAL

1994 has seen many changes in the format and policy of The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology. The decision not to provide free reprints is probably one which will affect most authors, but with the tight budget constraints, this could not have been helped. In our opinion, it was the "least of all possible evils". We have however, not compromised the two most important "strengths" of the journal - rapid publication after acceptance as far as possible (within 6-12 months) and wide dissemination (via various international indexing services like Current Contents). The lack of page charges, increasingly more prevalent among prominent journals, is also an important asset in our opinion, as many taxonomists and ecologists (especially in this region) do not have sufficient funds for this purpose.

For eight years now, the price for the Raffles Bulletin has stayed at US\$15/- per volume (with two numbers a year on average). This very low price has become untenable today, with the US dollar falling to all time lows, high costs of postage, paper, printing and manpower costs. As such, we have raised it to a more competitive sum of US\$50/- per volume. This increased cost must also be considered against the fact that the number of pages in each volume has increased substantially since 1990. The two numbers in each volume now reach almost 500 pages or more a year, from the 280-300 earlier on.

From the editorial perspective, the Bulletin has also decentralised its operations. The Executive Editorial Board now assumes the role of Associate Editors, sending out the manuscripts for review, assessing their scientific merit, advising authors on the suitability for publication, and making the necessary recommendations to the Managing Editor on their publication. This "decentralised" operation, we believe, will make the reviewing and acceptance procedure for manuscripts more efficient in view of the large number of manuscripts received. Also, as the Associate Editors are more familiar with their respective fields, decisions on accepting or rejecting papers are done faster and more objectively.

The quantity and quality of papers received for the Bulletin have also increased substantially over the last few years. In 1994, the Bulletin received over 60 manuscripts, and 1995 seems to be as busy as ever. The reorganisation of the Board and the reviewing cum acceptance process thus had to be streamlined if unnecessary delays are not to result. In line with this, from 1995, we will also be issuing a number of supplements. These supplements will essentially be large papers or monographs, and will be issued at irregular intervals depending on available manuscripts and funds. Two of the upcoming supplements for 1995 will be on crabs and spiders.

We also would like to welcome two more members to the editorial board. Dr Chan Kai Lok of the Department of Zoology is an international expert on midges, and was previously head of the Singapore's Vector Control and Research Department. Dr Damir Kovac of the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt am Main (Germany) has worked extensively in Malaysia on animal communities in bamboos as well as taxonomy of water insects, and has published extensively on these aspects. Their entry into the board, we hope, will boost the entomological component in the Bulletin.

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