

EDITORIAL

The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology (RBZ) has undergone numerous changes since the turn of the century. These include: changes to the editorial team and Editorial Board through the injection of “new” blood; adopting a different “look” by changing from the old B5 paper size format to a larger and “louder” A4 page size format in 2000 (Vol. 48), made more attractive with the introduction of cover pictures extracted from articles within; “stretching” the geographic scope of its papers from primarily Southeast Asia to include interesting papers from outside the region; and even occasional publication of papers on plant diversity in special supplement issues on certain geographic regions to provide a more complete picture of the diversity of the featured regions.

Our ‘flexible’ policy in considering papers outside the geographic scope has resulted in substantially increased submissions to the RBZ. We are also receiving larger papers. One problem, however, is that we are now receiving too many papers that have little or nothing to do with Southeast Asian biodiversity. All in all, the RBZ issues are getting thicker and costlier, and, with our limited financial and human resources, there is now a substantial backlog of papers waiting to be published. This is an unfortunate situation, since one of the main benefits of publishing in the RBZ has always been *rapid* publication. Where we once strived to publish papers 6-12 months after submission, the time taken now can stretch to as much as 18 months depending on the queue of papers accepted for publication. While this time-frame has not reached “serious” levels, we intend to “nip it in the bud” before it becomes systemic and even more difficult to correct. As such, we recently reviewed our journal policy, and are now applying stricter criteria on all new manuscript submissions to the RBZ. From now on, only manuscripts that strictly adhere to the geographic scope of the Southeast Asian region will be considered. Manuscripts on areas outside the geographic scope will not be considered regardless of whether or not specimens are deposited in the ZRC. Papers dealing with fauna from areas immediately adjacent or relevant to Southeast Asia (e.g., southern parts of China such as Yunnan or Hainan) or from drainages that are shared with Southeast Asia (e.g., Salween or Mekong) may, at the discretion of the Editors, be considered although priority will always be given to papers on Southeast Asian fauna. This applies to all new submissions, and will not affect any previously submitted manuscripts that may be already in press or currently under consideration. Furthermore, the journal will no longer be regularly publishing short notes or papers consisting solely of redescrptions or new records unless the editors and/or referees regard them as of exceptional interest.

All improvements in any journal and its papers are due in no small part to the efforts of the editorial team, Editorial Board and referees. Therefore, my sincere thanks go to the Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editors, Publications Editor, Editorial Board members, and referees for all their time and hard work. I especially thank recently retired Editorial Board members Drs Lester G. Cannon, T. J. Lam, Hiroyuki Morioka, D. H. Murphy, and D. J. W. Lane for their time and effort over the years. Their contributions have been pivotal in making the journal what it is today. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Drs Barry Brook, Indraneil Das, Fred Sheldon and R. A. I. Drew and Ruth O’Riordan to the Editorial Board.

What lies ahead for the RBZ? Our priority now is to get back to rapid publication of accepted papers. At the same time, we have plans for the RBZ to move towards online publishing within the next two years. We have already taken the first steps in accepting electronic manuscript submissions.

With the still poorly known fauna of Southeast Asia, I expect and look forward to seeing many more taxonomy and systematic papers, which account for the bulk of RBZ’s contributions. However, I also hope see more papers submitted on phylogeny (both morphological and molecular) of groups in which the distribution includes parts or all of Southeast Asia as well as regional ecological studies. I look forward to your continued support of the journal into the 21st Century.

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Managing Editor
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