

wide variety of topics was covered in 30 papers. The largest single category concerned the life-history, growth and development of benthic invertebrate taxa. Others dealt with the effects of environmental disturbance on benthic communities, food and feeding of invertebrates, fish-invertebrate interactions, benthic algae, behavioural adaptations, physiology and taxonomy. The main emphasis of the journal appears to be on lotic habitats but I hope that later issues will attract papers on the lentic environment.

The first four volumes of the journal appeared as *Freshwater Invertebrate Biology*, which was acquired by NABS in 1985. The transfer of ownership was accompanied by the adoption of a broader editorial policy, and a change to a bright eye-catching cover and an improved editorial style with text, tables and figures clearly set out in two-column format. There are four issues a year, each containing six to eight good-quality papers averaging about ten pages in length. Each issue carries between four and seven book reviews. Publication time is rapid — most papers are in press within four to six months of submission. The subscription price is relatively low and the journal provides good value for money, particularly for individual subscribers (who must, however, be NABS members).

There are already several well-established journals publishing work on freshwater biology. Although none of them deals specifically with benthological problems, there will be an element of competition and the \$40 per page page-charge may discourage individuals and possibly institutions from submitting to the newcomer. However, the journal should continue to attract high-quality papers, particularly because of its association with NABS.

Most contributions originated from workers in the United States, and only two papers in the sample for review came from Canada. However, despite the 'North American' tag to the journal's title it is clear from the instructions to authors that papers from elsewhere are acceptable. I look forward to the appearance of such papers; perhaps they could address the similarities and differences between European and American benthos and benthological problems. A section for short communications, comment and reply to previous papers would be welcome to enliven the presentation.

In the editorial to the first issue in the new format the editor states that quality will not be sacrificed for quantity. A rigorous editorial policy has ensured that such is the case, and this journal will make an important contribution to the freshwater biological literature. □

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Biological issues in question

John R. Durant

Biology & Philosophy. Editor Michael Ruse. *Reidel.* 4/yr. Dfl. 81 (individual), Dfl 211 (institutional); elsewhere \$29.50 (individual).

As Michael Ruse observes in his first editorial, in the past the philosophy of science was practically synonymous with the philosophy of physics. Even as recently as the early 1970s, only a handful of philosophers (most notably Ruse himself and his associate editor David Hull) worked mainly or exclusively on the philosophy of biology. This was partly because philosophers tended to view physics as the paradigmatic natural science, and partly because they believed that physics raised more, and more interesting, philosophical problems than its sister disciplines.

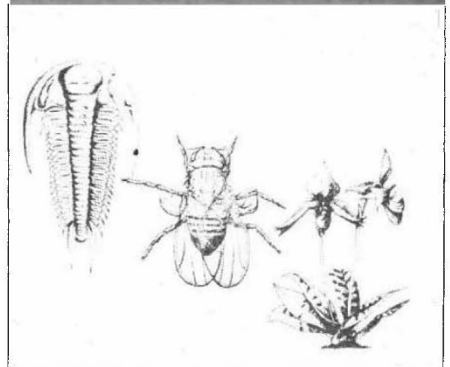
All this has changed over the past 15 years. With the spectacularly successful growth of biology, on the one hand, and the emergence of a number of major theoretical, moral and ideological controversies (particularly in the field of evolutionary biology), on the other, there has come the recognition that biology is every bit as scientific as physics, and that it raises just as many interesting philosophical issues. Today, there is a substantial and growing international community of what Ruse terms "thinking biologists" (what other sorts are there?), philosophers and others who share a concern to understand better the fundamental aims, methods, ideas and implications of biology.

Biology & Philosophy is intended to be the house journal for this scholarly community. Sensibly, the journal takes a generous view of its field and accepts not only mainstream philosophical but also relevant historical, sociological and other contributions. Its format is broadly conventional, with a mixture of topic articles, "target" articles plus multiple responses, book reviews and "booknotes". By the standards of much philosophy of science (which tends to verge on the obscurantist), its style is both accessible and engaging.

Some areas of biology currently attract much more philosophical interest than others. In Vol. 1, exactly two-thirds of the indexed contributions are concerned with evolution. This may seem excessive, but it is justified both by the central place of evolutionary theory in modern biology and by the wide range of important issues that are currently being debated in this area.

The first issue contains a helpful review article by John Collier on Daniel R. Brooks and E. O. Wiley's non-equilibrium

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thermodynamic theory of evolution, a revealing *in vivo* analysis by Ullica Segerstrale of the sociobiology controversy, and a useful three-way discussion between the editors, George C. Williams and Elliott Sober, of Sober's big book *The Nature of Selection*. Later issues follow up several of these topics, and include discussions of the philosophical status of evolutionary theory, evolutionary epistemology, and that old and much-flogged war-horse, evolutionary ethics.

Despite the obvious emphasis on evolution, the journal covers many other topics. Early issues include articles on the biological species concept (are species classes or individuals?), ecological modelling, and teleology and reduction. In future issues, we are promised treatments of Plato on kinds of animals, the mind-body problem and the second law of thermodynamics, and the biological roots of morality.

Biology & Philosophy has started well. If it can sustain its initial seriousness and readability, and if it can avoid getting bogged down in the kind of ideological word-play that has bedevilled so much previous debate about, for example, "biological determinism" and "reductionism", it will perform a genuine service. For the time being, certainly, this is a journal that no "thoughtful biologist" should ignore. □

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Autumn books

The next review supplement to appear in *Nature* will be Autumn Books, on 19 November. Among the books scheduled for review are *Bones of Contention: Controversies in the Search for Human Origins* by Roger Lewin; *The Purpose of Forests* by Jack Westoby; *Quiddities: An Intermittently Philosophical Dictionary* by W.V. Quine; *The Oxford Companion to the Mind* edited by R.L. Gregory; and *Academic Freedom & Apartheid* by Peter Ucko.