

World floras

Peter D. Moore

Nordic Journal of Botany. Editor-in-chief M. Lange. 6/yr. (Council for Nordic Publications in Botany.) DKr.480 plus postage.

THE *Nordic Journal of Botany* is a Fenno-scandian publication, but the botanical papers it contains are by no means so restricted in their geographical interest. There is a strong emphasis on taxonomic subjects, together with structural botany and taxonomic aspects of mycology, lichenology and phycology. Some of the topics covered are general and wide-ranging, such as proposals for a cladistic classification of green plants; others are very specific in their taxonomic and geographical coverage, the records of ascomycete fungi from northern Thailand for instance.

In order to provide an indication of the relative space assigned to the main subject areas, I have taken a sample of 70 recent papers in the journal and analysed their contents. Almost half of these articles are concerned with taxonomic subjects, mainly of a specific character and largely dealing with angiosperms. Mycological

articles comprise about 20 per cent and lichen and algae papers about 10 per cent each. Only 13 per cent of the papers examined were specifically concerned with anatomy or morphology, and despite the editorial intention to include palaeobotanical subjects no article of this type occurred within the sample. Very few papers are directly concerned with techniques and few involve an experimental approach to taxonomic studies.

Some attention is given to floras of certain under-studied parts of the world, not only dealing with angiosperms, but also with lichens and fungi. Indeed the geographical spread of articles is very wide and over 30 per cent could be regarded as of interest to a phytogeographer. Ecologists, however, will find less of interest here; less than a tenth of the papers have a distinctly ecological slant and most of these concern lichens and fungi.

General production standards are high, including the reproduction of photographs, especially photomicrographs. I feel that the journal could come to play a useful part in the literature of taxonomic botany, particularly if it were to place greater emphasis on experimental studies. □

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Water works

J.H.S. Blaxter

Aquatic Toxicology. Editors-in-chief D.C. Malins and A. Jensen. 8/yr in 2 vols. (Elsevier Biomedical.) Dfl.440, \$176. *Marine Ecology*. Editor-in-chief R. Riedl. 4/yr. (Paul Parey, Munich.) DM 380, \$159. *Biological Oceanography*. Editor-in-chief R.L. Haedrich. 4/yr. (Crane, Russak.) \$45 (personal); \$82 (institutional).

MUCH of the research in marine biology has as its justification the need to preserve the marine environment for its food supplies and for leisure. Strong financial support for studies on pollution by sewage and industrial effluents, eutrophication, insecticides and dumping of nuclear waste has thus rightly been a feature of marine biological work over the past two decades.

Given this it is surprising that a journal such as *Aquatic Toxicology* (AT) was only started in April, 1981. The journal was launched, say the editors, in response to the need for a focus for the publication of "meritorious studies in aquatic toxicology", and they hope to take in all aspects of the mechanisms and assessment of toxicity and the development of techniques in the field and laboratory. The first few issues include many papers on molluscs and fish, especially salmonids and flatfish, with the emphasis being on the effect of hydrocarbons and heavy metals. Certainly such papers were spread over many journals in the past and it seems likely that AT will have a useful centralizing effect in the future.

It will quickly be realized that *Marine Ecology* (ME) is not a new journal but a revamped continuation of *Pubblicazione della Stazione Zoologica di Napoli*, originally founded nearly a century ago. The new name is unfortunate in being similar to another journal (*Marine Ecology, Progress Series* — for review see *Nature* 293, 351; 1981) and to the continuing series of books edited by Otto Kinne; in addition the citation suggested, *PSZNI: Marine Ecology*, is clumsy.

Although the face-lift has been accompanied by a change of editor, the journal



will not change its range of interests very much and is devoted to "promoting scientific knowledge of the sea on a global scale and of the Mediterranean in particular", especially

work on the intimate environment of the sea as exemplified by direct observations on coasts and under sea, long-term investigations and under-water experimentation.

New outlet for old bones

Barry Cox

Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology. Editor J. Zidek. 4/yr. (University of Oklahoma School of Geology.) \$30 (personal); \$60 (institutional).

UNLIKE their invertebrate counterparts, vertebrate palaeontologists are more likely to have had some biological training, and to deal with biological problems, and are less likely to be concerned with stratigraphy. Until now, they have had to publish in general palaeontological journals (*Palaeontology*, for example), in journals concerned with particular geographical areas (*Vertebrata Palasiatica*) or not primarily in the English language (*Paléovertebrata*), or in the small-format journal *Paleobiology* which covers only biological matters.

The *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* (JVP) does therefore provide a new opportunity, for it is an English-language, large-format (7" x 9" print area) journal that accepts papers on any aspect of the palaeontology of chordates. The typeface is clear and the overall standard of production is high. Text figures, half-tones and plates are printed running along with the two-column text, occupying all or part

of a page. (Greater editorial control is needed here, however, for some line-drawings and plates are too faint or with insufficient contrast, and the mixture of white-background and black-background figures in a single plate is unattractive.) Each issue contains about 120 pages.

Analysis of the first four issues shows that 60 per cent of the papers were short (up to 10 pages) but the range is considerable, the longest having 55 pages. The scientific standard runs the gamut usually found in other journals — so JVP isn't merely publishing papers rejected elsewhere. There have been several book reviews, some of which are excellent, but so far there have been no editorials or comments on papers published in previous issues of the journal.

To date authors are overwhelmingly from North America (31 out of 35 papers), but I am sure that the international editorial board will be working hard to get more contributions from other continents. They should succeed: it's an attractive journal and good value. □

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