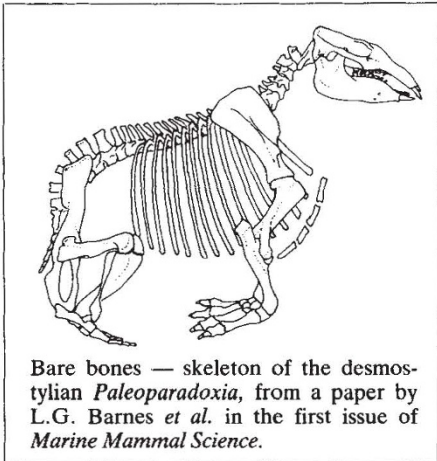


Zoologists all at sea

Sheila S. Anderson

Marine Mammal Science. Editor Joseph R. Geraci. *Society for Marine Mammalogy*, 1,041 New Hampshire Street, Lawrence, Kansas 66044, USA. 4/yr. North America \$70; elsewhere \$78.

FROM its title, *Marine Mammal Science* might seem to cater for specialists, but it is in fact aimed at a group of people as disparate in their interests as the creatures they work on. "Marine mammals" includes seals, sealions, walruses, whales, dolphins, sea otters, manatees, dugongs and polar bears, creatures which do not all share the same ancestry but have in common a greater or lesser ability to spend time beneath the surface of the sea. While



Bare bones — skeleton of the desmostylian *Paleoparadoxia*, from a paper by L.G. Barnes *et al.* in the first issue of *Marine Mammal Science*.

there are several organizations and individuals who specialize in marine mammal studies, the fascinating adaptations of anatomy and physiology shown by the animals attracts terrestrial mammalogists to study their topic on very different species. The field also lures devotees of a quite different character — those who simply love beautiful seals and the great leviathans of the deep.

In the past, papers about marine mammals have been spread throughout the journal world, but now the Society for Marine Mammalogy has offered a central place for the results of research and observations. Each of the six issues of *Marine Mammal Science* published so far contains three or four articles and up to two short notes which are subject to peer review. Letters to the editor are solicited, and there are book reviews, notices of new books and an occasional opinion slot, which is an invited contribution on a selected topic. The first two issues contained news, Society business and "Memories" sections, but these have not appeared in later issues.

The Society made its debut in the pub-

lishing world by including in its first three issues review papers presented by the top people in the field at its 1983 Biennial Conference. This provided an impressive list of authors to begin with, but the quality of the other articles is perhaps of greater importance as a guide to the journal's health. The standard is generally high and there is a good mix of material on the two main groups, seals and whales. The only detectable bias (30 per cent of the articles published to date) is towards papers of an anatomical nature which may be too specialized for publication elsewhere.

The key question is whether *Marine Mammal Science* will attract a wide spectrum of original research papers in the future; a journal dedicated to a named group of animals, and with a relatively small circulation (about 900 Society members and subscribing institutions), may have difficulty persuading topic-orientated workers to abandon the well-established, wide-circulation journals. The time from acceptance of manuscripts to publication of 3–6 months is a very

favourable factor at present, but the \$45 page charge might be daunting, certainly to the individual and these days probably to institutions as well. The paper quality is good, allowing a high standard of illustration, and the editor is keeping a tight rein on standard and style.

The journal was initially used to communicate news to Society members, perhaps to meet the needs of non-scientific members, but this has been discontinued and the content is now strongly scientific. Marine mammalogists need to communicate with each other. Let us hope that they can be persuaded to do this at a scientific level in their new journal. If that happens then the rest of the zoological world will have to keep an eye on *Marine Mammal Science* for the exciting developments, and not just the ones hard to publish elsewhere. □

Sheila S. Anderson is a Principal Scientific Officer in the Sea Mammal Research Unit, Natural Environment Research Council, c/o British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0ET, UK.

Fish figures

T.J. Pitcher

Journal of Applied Ichthyology. Editors W. Ahne, K. Lillelund, H.H. Reichenbach-Klinke and K. Tiews. *Paul Parey*. 4/yr. DM 132.

IN MANY developing countries fisheries provide a crucial source of food and valuable employment yet, compared to the well-fed developed nations, there is often a woeful lack of basic knowledge about the biology of the fish stocks. Scientific management of these fisheries, which are characteristically multi-species and often threatened by conflicts between artisanal and industrialized sectors, must be based on such fundamental research.

A particularly welcome aim of *Journal of Applied Ichthyology* is to publish research on fisheries in developing countries, especially on aid-related projects. It was disappointing, therefore, to find that only two of the 28 papers in the six issues available for review dealt with this subject. In fact, overall there is a preponderance of work on the traditional well-worked species of cod, eel, carp and plaice (nine papers) and on the hallowed fishery themes of age, growth, food and migration (eight papers). In the future, it is to be hoped that the editors can do more to actively encourage contributions relevant to the management of fisheries in developing countries, since it is here that the new journal could meet a need not fully satisfied by longer-established publications.

The journal aims to publish work in all areas of applied fish biology but, apart

from the scientific basis of fishery management, aquaculture (four papers), pathology, immunology and ecotoxicology are specifically mentioned. Surprisingly, since there is already a specialized journal covering this area, the largest number of papers (ten) is concerned with fish diseases.

Of the third-world fisheries papers, a Seychelles fishery survey using trolling lines reveals a small 2,500-tonne stock of tuna, which could be exploited seasonally on a small scale, while yield analysis for a valuable prawn fishery in Kerala suggests that, for optimum yields, current exploitation should not be increased any further. Other interesting contributions examine

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the potential of flounders as a by-crop in the cage-culture of salmon, the cultivation of marine amphipods as food for farmed fish, filial cannibalism by male tilapia in relation to reproductive success, and the results of extensive Baltic cod tagging experiments which have previously appeared only in the lamentable "grey literature" of fisheries.

There are a number of minor irritations which should have been put right by referees or the editors before publication. In general, however, this journal will be welcomed in libraries used by fisheries biologists. □

T.J. Pitcher is Senior Lecturer in the School of Animal Biology, University of Wales, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2UW, UK.