

an integration of different disciplines in an attempt to explain seed behaviour. The different approaches to seed science alone range from plant ecology to molecular genetics, and in the absence of a quality journal devoted to fundamental studies on seeds, publications have tended to be scattered throughout the plant science literature.

There are a few journals devoted to seeds, but these concentrate on applied aspects. So, to provide a single forum for the publication of high-quality basic research, *Seed Science Research* was launched in March 1991. In its first five issues, there have been two very different but equally good reviews; 36 research papers of mostly high quality, covering a range of topics from seed development to ageing; one very welcome exchange of conflicting opinion between two prominent research groups; and seven book reviews. Publication times have been impressive, with most papers appearing within six months of submission and some within three to four months. Of course, this may reflect

a paucity of manuscripts — several important papers have appeared in other journals since the launch of *Seed Science Research*, suggesting that a number of researchers are 'sitting on the fence', waiting perhaps for the reputation of the new journal to become firmly established.

Recent approaches to the study of seeds, such as the use of hormone-deficient mutants and the analysis of gene expression, herald advances that could have profound implications for future crop development and biodiversity conservation. *Seed Science Research* is a logical vehicle for such basic research and the maintenance of its present high standards, through the continued (and hopefully increased) support of mainstream seed biologists, should secure its position as the principal journal for the advancement of seed science. □

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some signs of lack of an editorial master-plan. For example, there are two reviews on the role of catecholamines in controlling breathing of fishes, written by two different groups of authors and apparently supporting different theories. There is astonishingly little over-lap in their two reference lists. It would have been much more helpful if these two reviews had been brought together.

Other reviews cover fish disease as a modulator for marine pollution, alarm signals, solitary chemosensory cells, fish swimming, marine reserves for managing reef fisheries, amphibious fish and death rates; there is an especially innovative review of cannibalism in fish, with a very useful bibliography.

The editor has spread his net wide, perhaps a little too wide, in these early issues. A little more coherence within each issue might have been a good idea. The editor's aim of "an up-to-date synopsis of work and insight of the major issues currently occupying research workers" seems to have been achieved. Whether it is possible to both "give specialists a brief but comprehensive review of developments" and "provide the non-specialist with awareness and understanding" remains to be seen.

In summary, this seems to be a promising journal, with room for some evolution of content, style and length. The editor is to be congratulated if he can maintain an output of four issues a year in the coming years. □

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Casting the net widely

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Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries. Editor Tony J. Pitcher. *Chapman and Hall*. 4/yr. US and Canada \$185, Europe £99, elsewhere £110 (institutional); US and Canada \$59, Europe £32, elsewhere £32 (personal).

THIS journal, edited by T. J. Pitcher of Imperial College London with a technical editor and an editorial board of 19 well-known scientists, is dedicated to publishing review articles on any aspect of fish and fisheries biology, with an emphasis on adaptation, function or exploitation. The "Aims and Scope" declared on the inside front cover, however, list a series of topics that cover almost every conceivable subject: evolutionary biology, zoogeography, taxonomy, including biochemical taxonomy and stock identification, genetics and genetic manipulation, physiology, functional morphology, behaviour, ecology, fisheries assessment, development (ontogeny), exploitation, aquaculture and conservation. In fact, almost everything is apparently included except cell biology, biochemistry, disease and parasites, and pollution.

In his leading article in the first issue, Pitcher evades defining the word 'fish', leaving the series open to "animals which live in water and are harvested by man". These rather strange open-ended limits to acceptable topics seem to have been breached in the first three issues,

where some of the reviews are strongly biased towards species that are certainly of little commercial value. Indeed, they are probably exploited only by research workers.

So far there have been three or four reviews of 20–30 pages in each issue. They are brisk and tend to deal only with the more recent literature. The subject matter covered is wide, with



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