

others might all be readers and gain from the interactions, but I rather doubt whether this will actually happen. I suspect that this may become a journal more related to clinical practice and its social and ethical implications than to high-profile original contributions. Though this may not have been the original intention behind the journal, it could turn out to be the right course; perhaps it indicates a niche that has not been filled by other journals so far.

My advice to the editors would be to encourage the journal to develop along whichever direction it looks like taking and not be too worried if it fails to attract high-profile original work. There should be plenty of opportunities for useful contributions over the next few years. □

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Evolving discipline finds a forum

Nutritional Neuroscience

Editor Chandan Prasad
Harwood Academic. 6/yr. 86 euros

Public Health Nutrition

Editor Barrie Margetts
CABI. 4/yr. £175, \$310 (institutional); £48, \$80 (special rate for members of The Nutrition Society)

Gema Frühbeck

Given the cornucopia of nutrition literature, one could justifiably ask if we need yet another journal in this field. Nutrition in the twenty-first century will be based increasingly on creating an interdisciplinary field of epidemiology, structural biology, integrative physiology and molecular pathogenesis. This should ensure that we revolutionize the ways in which we investigate, diagnose and treat nutrition-related health problems.

The late twentieth century has seen a number of fundamental transformations in the study of the brain. Recently, the qualitative approach crucial to understanding nutrition has been embraced by neuroscientists to the extent that the subject may be on the verge of a golden age, in which fields once thought impenetrable can be explored in detail. The publishing venture of *Nutritional Neuroscience* is an acknowledgement of the growing community of researchers dedicated to studying these very exciting topics from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. The enterprise will play an important part in bridging the gap between neuroscientists

and nutritionists by focusing on eating disorders, at the same time as trying to unravel the complex underlying neuroanatomical and pathophysiological processes.

Given the Jeremiahs who prophesy that it is foolish to launch journals in such difficult financial times, the publishing venture of two new nutrition-oriented journals must be congratulated.

Nutritional Neuroscience is a handsome periodical covering an admirably broad range of topics including the effects of the various components of diet, dietary supplements and food additives on neurochemistry, neurobiology and behavioural biology. The neural and hormonal control of food intake, and dietary considerations in the management of neurologic and psychiatric disorders are also covered. It is the first journal to focus specifically on this area, and fills an important niche. The journal therefore merits reading by neuroscientists, nutritionists, neurologists and psychiatrists.

Public Health Nutrition was launched in March last year to cover studies involving nutritional epidemiology, nutrition-related health promotion, evaluation of the effectiveness of intervention studies aimed at improving health, the role of nutrition in high-risk and vulnerable groups as well as population-based research related to primary prevention of illness. This periodical will be valued by nutritionists and dietitians involved in nutritional epidemiology research, primary prevention and public health, together with epidemiologists and health-promotion specialists who are interested in the increasingly recognized role played by nutrition in disease prevention.

This attractive journal has an outstanding editorial board, with members representing 11 countries and committed to supporting, developing and maintaining an international perspective. So far, about half of the articles have come from Europe, the United States and Canada. Interestingly, 39 per cent of articles have been submitted by groups from different countries working in collaboration.

The period from submission to acceptance is generally two to three months, although the lag for actual publication is around five to six months. *Public Health Nutrition* fulfils the requisites of a high-quality journal and is therefore most welcome.

Web-surfing scientists may also enjoy visiting the electronic address of The Nutrition Society (<http://www.nutsoc.org.uk/phnj>) to browse through the papers of all of the issues of *Public Health Nutrition*. Updated regularly, the site is extremely user-friendly. □
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Birds unlimited

BWP Update: The Journal of Birds of the Western Palearctic

Editor Malcolm Ogilvie
Oxford University Press. 3/yr. Print only. £85, \$150 (institutional); £45, \$75 (personal)

Juha Merilä

Ornithology is in a unique position among the biological sciences: practitioners are, with ever-increasing pace and in meticulous detail, being deluged with new literature about the lives and appearances of their study objects. Caught in this explosion of information, the relatively recent (1977–94), nine-volume, 7021-page reference work, *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa* (Oxford University Press, £795), also known as *Birds of the Western Palearctic* (BWP), is already outdated in many places. A new journal, *BWP Update*, was therefore launched to keep this ambitious and authoritative work as comprehensive as possible.

Since its launch in April 1997, *BWP Update* has covered 30 species (out of the 797 in BWP), including short descriptions for 10 species new to the Western Palearctic. The style and format of the book are largely maintained, but a new section on conservation has been added. Distribution maps are now re-drawn and updated in colour.

With its lavish and well-edited appearance, *BWP Update* may appeal to both professional and amateur ornithologists and birdwatchers, although many may be put off by its high subscription price — especially since much of the ‘new information’, such as updates on population trends and distribution ranges, has already appeared in better formats in recent books. On reflection, an easily updateable and searchable online/CD-ROM edition of *BWP Update* would be a more valuable innovation than this journal for those using BWP on a regular basis. □

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Depends how much time you've got

Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials

Editors Wolfgang Knauss and Igor Emri
Kluwer. 4/yr. Dfl525, \$262

David P. Pope

It seems only yesterday that we were all decrying the proliferation of journals (the comment by one of my colleagues some



years ago that there are so many journals sprouting up that soon there will be a *Journal of Shear Stress* comes to mind), while now I mostly receive announcements that our library is cancelling journals. Yet new journals do continue to appear—and we wonder in each case if the world would have been better off with the trees.

There is no doubt that some new journals appear because a particular field is currently 'hot', only for the journals to disappear after the field cools. But in other cases, there is a community of scholars working on similar problems but in different contexts, and doing their research in different departments and fields. The logical next step is to establish a journal to connect these scholars and to provide a forum for their output. How do we then decide if the tree/journal balance is a favourable one?

I believe that the decision depends on the generality of the subject, its long-term importance to science and technology in general, and how large the potential community is. In the case of the potential audience for *Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials*, there is a large and disparate community working in the field, but they are separated by material systems, discipline and department. As a result, this critical materials problem tends to be marginalized in the typical journal. Many of us study the microstructural details that lead to a time-dependence in a given material behaviour. But we tend not to study the details of the time-dependence itself, and we are even less likely to model it carefully so that it can be described in analytical detail.

The goal of this journal is to provide a forum for researchers whose focus is on the time-dependence itself and to inject more science into issues of durability and ageing than has been the case in the past.

The journal has clearly made a slow start. Five issues have appeared since its inception in 1997, with the sixth due out soon, but the frequency of publication is increasing. The articles published are true to the journal's goals, focusing on time-dependence itself in materials ranging from foams to epoxies to polycrystalline metals to composites. Those for whom

the details of time-dependent material behaviour is essential should read and publish in this journal. □

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Working together for the Earth

Environmental Science & Policy

Editor-in-chief Joe Wisniewski
Elsevier. 6/yr. \$477, DFL 940

David G. Victor

The objective of this journal is to "build bridges among and between scientists, policy makers and decision-makers in industry". In practice, as this journal shows, that worthy goal is difficult to meet.

Of the journal's strongest articles, most are written for specialists and build few bridges with other disciplines or decision-makers. Policy implications are left latent or are stated so broadly as to be of little use for real decision-making. Such studies belong in traditional disciplinary journals. Glaring in its absence from the four numbers provided for this review was the discipline of economics, which is a vital guide as policy makers struggle to allocate scarce resources. Also scant is attention to the implications of uncertainty for policy choices.

About half the articles reviewed are brief surveys or comments on existing research. They lack the depth needed to push the frontier of policy research or to synthesize research across disciplines to create new insights and bridges. Perhaps such articles would appeal to readers who have a broad interest in policy and environmental science, but few general readers are likely to glance at this journal—not least because the publisher has put the cost of subscriptions in the stratosphere.

However, a few gems shine. Among them is the study of carbon that is accumulating in the Canadian forest products sector (FPS) such as in wooden buildings, landfills, pulp and paper (vol. 2, no. 1, 25–41). Most forest carbon is in the forests themselves, but the authors show that FPS carbon is a large part of the net flux of Canadian forest carbon and a growing fraction of the FPS flux crosses political borders because forest products are increasingly traded overseas.

Such studies underscore how tricky it will be to create an accurate and comprehensive system for tracking carbon. This year, *Environmental Science & Policy* devoted a whole issue to this problem. The Kyoto Protocol, which limits fluxes of carbon dioxide and other gases that cause global warming,

makes the issue urgent. The papers identify the technical hurdles and show that countries will be unable to assure their compliance with the protocol until an accounting system is agreed. □

This journal has not yet found its voice, but its goals are important and there are hints as to how they can be met. □

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Modern questions in a traditional form

Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Editor N. Jardine

Pergamon. 4/yr. \$197, 176.52 euros (institutional); \$45, 40.39 euros (personal)

W. F. Bynum

Few disciplines seem to have such a high ratio of journals to practitioners as the history and philosophy of science, medicine and technology. The history and the philosophy of science have tended to drift apart over the past few decades, because of increasing specialization and the discovery of the subject by scholars originally trained in history or philosophy. For some, the social history of medicine or science is pretty much all there is to it. Traditional philosophers of science are bemused by the emphasis on the social, as opposed to the cognitive, content of this historiography, and feel beleaguered by the burgeoning field of bioethics.

Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, the product of a 1998 fission of an existing journal (*Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*), combines both traditional and cutting-edge features. It is traditional in offering space for both philosophers and historians; traditional, too, in that its philosophical balance is within the realism with which most scientists identify (discovery rather than social construction is the name of the game). Thus, Nils Roll-Hansen has some sharp criticisms of Bruno Latour's anthropological account of laboratory life, and Martha Keyes' analysis of the relationship between prions and molecular biology's central dogma takes the science seriously.

At the same time, the articles in the first four issues were written by professionals within the broadly defined field of 'science studies'. They are aware of the variety of approaches that have been used to examine the creation of scientific knowledge. They articulate the wider issues of social responsibility and power that permeate the modern scientific enterprise. Almost all of the articles