

# PSAMMONALIA

The Newsletter of the  
International Association of Meiobenthologists

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## International Association of Meiobenthologists

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You may make your donations to the Bertil Swedmark Fund directly to the IAM bank account: Lloyds TSB, 8 Royal Parade, Plymouth PL1 1HB, UK. - Account Number 6586667, Sort Code 30-96-68.

## Editorial

### Meiofaunology – Impactful, Insightful or Indifferent?

I had an interesting conversation with a highly successful benthic ecologist the other day over some liquid stimulant. He confided that many years ago in his callow youth that he had toyed for a while with being a meiofauna researcher. On closer contact with the discipline he had concluded that it was not going to be possible to address important ecological issues employing said meiofauna and so he rapidly got out of the discipline and back into macrofauna. Intrigued, of course, I asked the key question – did he think he was right or has he regretted that decision. The answer was depressing. He has never regretted the decision for a moment and knows he was right when he reads meiofauna papers.

I recalled this conversation recently because here in England science research is going through one of its periodic shake-ups and we are being entreated to ask ‘Big Questions’. I do not think any of us set out to ask trivial questions exactly but it does raise the point of whether meiofaunologists have addressed big questions – or have we indulged in the intellectual equivalent of navel gazing. To put it another way, do we write papers that address issues relevant to other disciplines or are we only talking to each other?

Our society lacks a mission statement but its website notes that *The Association is dedicated to the dissemination of information by publishing a quarterly newsletter, Psammonalia, and sponsoring a triennial International Conference* but dissemination of information to whom,

just each other? Is anyone outside our cosy little club reading our work? If

not, is this because meiofauna research is an intellectual dead end, doomed by its nature to trail forever behind applying ideas from other marine science and leading on none? Or are we just not asking the right – big – questions?

### Lies, Damned Lies And Statistics

I think its been around for a while but I have just been introduced to the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute of Higher Education website on the Academic Ranking Of World Universities 2003.

<http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/ranking.htm>

Have a look – I think I’ll let readers draw their own conclusions.

**John Lambshead**

## Of Websites, Trojan todes and Script Kittys

It has been well nigh 6 years since the last revision of the IAM website and given today s rapid pace of technological advancement - Moore s Law and all - we definitely are past the need for a facelift. As with all tasks these days the question is What few minutes of the day that remain untasked can be set aside to accomplish the rewrite and, perhaps more important, Who will volunteer their expertise and creativity for the task? It would be fortunate timing if a new beta version of the IAM website could be completed before TWIMCO this summer. Such a schedule would permit a grand unveiling at the triennial face-to-face convention enabling special interests and fat-cat lobbyists to build a ground-swell of popular support for the revision that ultimately would result in the election, unlike a current super power leader, of IAM Website III. (Ah, apologies for sinking into the political realm - the US quadrennial efforts to unseat the latest sacred bush have taken hold of even sane Americans.) Unfortunately, completion of a new website before TWIMCO is well beyond the current Webmaster s personal scheduling; up to 5 new courses in 9 mo., a fledgling graduate program and a newly developed interest in the field of personality disorder profiling have become all consuming. The current site is hosted on Coastal Carolina University s servers and is maintained using MS FrontPage. Both of these facts are limiting: ITS at CCU are less than supportive, and we all know how much trust should be placed in Billy-

Boy products. For example, collection of form data to facilitate meeting organization and maintenance of a list server to distribute *Psammonalia* very likely may be beyond the abilities of CCU Server Administrators to implement. Any suggestions as to how to complete a rewrite given the current restrictions and potential time schedule should be sent to the current Webmaster at [kwalt@coastal.edu](mailto:kwalt@coastal.edu).

On another computer related issue, it is unfortunate that members of IAM have not found a way of exploiting the current proliferation of generic computer worms and backdoors with the eminently more descriptive acronym computer tode. Not only would the new phrase be more precise we all know many nematodes are parasites and computer viruses are definitely parasitic but our field of study would receive some much needed, all be it potentially negative publicity. With an average of 6 visits per day to the IAM website at only 1:37 minutes per visit any publicity, even negative, would help. A popular movement to supplant one of the many terms for computer viruses does not seem beyond the capabilities of our society. My suggestion would be get rid of the term Trojan horse and replace it with the more appropriate term Trojan tode. I m sure if one of the many IAM hackers out there, no script kitty s need apply, wrote a particularly elegant virus with the intent to publicize it as a tode the news wires would be flashing back and forth about meiofauna for at least the next day or two. Please send any other ideas on how to market meiofauna more effectively to [kwalt@coastal.edu](mailto:kwalt@coastal.edu).

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## **TWIMCO, Ravenna 2004.**

For a number of reasons, this edition of Psammonalia is a little late in reaching you. Hopefully, members will have been keeping up to date with TWIMCO through the Association's web page and through e-mail circulars. We include a recent message from the organisation board.

### **Dear meiobenthologists,**

The deadline for submission of abstracts has been extended to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2004.

Forms and further information can be found at the web site [www.meiofauna.org](http://www.meiofauna.org)

Please send the abstract via e-mail ([rebecchi.lorena@unimore.it](mailto:rebecchi.lorena@unimore.it)). This is the correct address; if you get an error message, please try again later. Our server is experiencing some problems, which however should be solved by the time you read this message. Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Best wishes,  
The board.

## **Swedmark Fund Awards for TWIMCO.**

The Swedmark Student Travel Fund was set up by the IAM to provide support to doctoral or recent postdoctoral students to enable them to attend the Association's triennial conferences. Please study the criteria below and decide if you may be eligible. If you want to apply then please send the following information to [todaro.antonio@unimore.it](mailto:todaro.antonio@unimore.it)

- Your name and address
- Your field of study
- The title of your proposed oral or poster presentation

- A declaration that you meet the eligibility criteria shown below.

Awards are offered of €200 (EUROs) towards the participation costs of TWIMCO.

The exact number of awards is not absolutely determined but could be as many as fifteen.

The awards will be made in cash, during the conference.

Successful candidates who do not subsequently attend TWIMCO will not receive the award and the money will return to the Swedmark Fund.

Applications will be judged by the IAM Executive committee using essentially the same eligibility and priority protocols originally proposed by past president Shirayama for the last meeting in Boston (ELIMCO, 2001).

### **Eligibility:**

Candidates who are eligible for the award must meet the following conditions.

- a) The candidates must give oral or poster presentation at TWIMCO.
- b) The candidates must be a masters, doctoral or a post-doctoral student awarded their Ph.D. degree later than January 1, 1999.
- c) The candidates may not have any other financial support for participating ELIMCO.

### **Priority:**

Successful applicants will be selected by the executive committee of IAM. As criteria of selection, candidates fulfilling the following conditions will be the first choice.

- a) Applicants from countries where the distance of travel to Ravenna is very great.
- b) The quality of the applicants proposed presentation.

### **Notification:**

Successful applicants will be notified by 15th April 2004

**PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR  
APPLICATIONS AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE!**

**IAM members** may be interested in the following new publication for which we have arranged a special price reduction. See below...

The Ray Society is pleased to announce the publication of:

***“An Introduction to Copepod  
Diversity”***

*by Geoff Boxshall with Sheila Halsey*

Copepods are small but extremely abundant crustaceans which occur in every type of aquatic habitat. They are amazingly diverse in body form, reflecting their diversity in mode of life and the rapid expansion of taxonomic knowledge concerning copepods has made it difficult for students and non-specialists to access the voluminous, but scattered primary literature. Published in two parts, this volume provides a systematic overview of the entire group – from marine plankton to subterranean forms, and from parasites to minute inhabitants of the interstitial spaces between sediment particles. It provides a family by family account of all copepods, and for each family-level group the book contains:

1. An **illustrated diagnosis** of the family, supported by line drawings adapted from the best available sources and redrawn to a standard format.
2. A **list of included genera** - with approximate number of species.
3. A **taxonomic notes** section, highlighting some of the remaining taxonomic problems.
4. A **key to genera** for every family (with three exceptions), and
5. An **introduction to the biology** of the family - serving as an entry point to the literature (key

references or reviews, details of hosts, etc.)

The book is designed to facilitate the identification of copepods, whether you wish to identify an endoparasite from a sea squirt, a member of a deep-sea hydrothermal vent community, or just a common planktonic copepod from your local lake or estuary. This volume will enable you to identify to genus-level in the overwhelming majority of cases, and will provide you with an entry point into the biological literature.

This work is intended as a companion volume to Ray Society volume number 159, *Copepod Evolution* by Huys & Boxshall. It comprises 966 pages and is supported by 289 plates of line drawings. It is bound as two hardback volumes and is fully indexed.

The two-volume set can be ordered direct from the Ray Society using the form below.

Dr Nick Evans,  
Honorary Secretary, The Ray Society,  
c/o The Natural History Museum,  
Cromwell Road,  
London SW7 5BD,  
UK.

**The full retail price is £150 plus Postage & Packing.**

**A special pre-publication price of only £80 plus P & P has been negotiated for members of the International Association of Meiobenthologists.**

If you would like to take advantage of this offer, please contact me on [psammon@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:psammon@nhm.ac.uk) and I will send you a copy of the order form.

## **Meiofauna, consultancy and the Natural History Museum, London.**

I hope you will find a project I have been involved with as a member of staff for the last 18 months of interest. In October 2002 we began work to describe the diversity and abundance of meiofauna in the intertidal and subtidal regions of Kuwait.

Sampling is carried out on our behalf every 3 months at 15 intertidal stations and every 6 months at 16 subtidal stations and will continue for five years. This large project is commercially funded and has allowed us to employ four new members of staff (including me!) and has dramatically increased the man-hours devoted to the study of meiofauna here at the Museum. Tim Ferrero and I began by training two technicians and a sandwich-year student to extract, identify and quantify meiofauna at the higher taxa level. This was followed by the addition of a fourth technician in February; thankfully he was already experienced with microscopy studies and meiofauna (particularly copepods) and quickly fitted into the team.

Not only is the project noteworthy because of the extent of the data that will be generated, but it aims to identify as many meiofauna taxa as possible to species level. Samples from five intertidal and two subtidal surveys have been extracted, and base-line data sets of the Nematoda (by Tim and I) and Copepoda (by Rony Huys) have been established for both the intertidal and subtidal sites. Also, Roger Bamber has examined the oligochaetes, Ilsa Bartsch has kindly identified the mites and Graham Bennell is beginning to review the kinorhynch.

The project aims to help decipher the complex interactions of anthropogenic impact and biological variability at both the seasonal and inter-annual level and will also provide a detailed biological inventory of meiofauna in the region. We are now on the way to collating the first year of seasonal data and taxonomic papers describing new species of mites and copepods will hopefully follow shortly. Whilst we continue with more samples, the nematode specimens will be reviewed, and we will produce new descriptions as soon as possible – we have so far encountered over 450 species (approx. 10,000 individuals), which means rather a lot of figures to draw!

Dr Roger Bamber is the Zoology Department Consultancy Leader and Dr Tim Ferrero is the project leader and senior nematode taxonomist.

**Natalie Barnes**

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*This Newsletter is not part of the scientific literature for taxonomic purposes.*

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# International Association of Meiobenthologists

## Application for Membership or Renewal

The International Association of Meiobenthologists is a non-profit scientific society representing meiobenthologists in all aquatic disciplines. The Association is dedicated to the dissemination of information by publishing a quarterly newsletter and sponsoring a triennial International Conference. The newsletter, *Psammonalia*, is published mid-month in February, May, August and November. Membership is open to any person who is actively interested in the study of meiofauna. Annual membership dues are 10 euro (\$ 10 US) and you may pay up to 3 years in advance, i.e. 30 euro (\$30). New members will receive *Psammonalia* beginning with the February issue of the current year. If you are able, please add extra money to be contributed to the Bertil Swedmark Fund, which is used to help students or others who wish to attend the triennial International Conference.

Please check appropriate boxes:

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(\*) New members please introduce yourself to the IAM in 10 lines for publication in *Psammonalia*.