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Dues are £5 per year payable to Mike Gee.

“This newsletter is not deemed to be a valid publication for formal taxonomic purposes”

EDITORIAL

In the last issue of *Psammonalia* I issued the bet that a survey of any new and unexplored coastal area in the world would not come up with more than 5% of genera which were not already well known and described. The point I was making is that identification of marine meiobenthos to the generic level should really no longer be regarded as the province of specialist taxonomists, and for many ecological purposes this taxonomic level is perfectly adequate. I had not expected any rapid response, either challenging or supporting the assertion, but Wilfried Westheide send me a reprint of his chapter (in Galapagos Marine Invertebrates, edited by M.J. James) reviewing the results of a meiofaunal survey of the Galapagos Islands which I had not seen before and more or less supports it. "Almost 95%" of the species identified belonged to known genera, and no new taxa higher than the level of genus were found.

The cosmopolitan nature of meiobenthic genera really is quite intriguing. For many macrobenthic phyla this does not appear to be the case. Some years ago I did some work with an Indonesian student on the North coast of Java where the ecological equivalents of molluscs and echinoderms which I was familiar with at home all belonged to different genera: *Tellina* became *Tellinides*, *Amphiura* became *Amphioplus* and so on. Strangely enough, though, all the polychaete worms belonged to familiar genera. Does this really mean that there is something different about the adaptive radiation and evolution of molluscs and echinoderms from the polychaetes, the latter being similar to meiobenthic genera in their cosmopolitan distribution? Or is it that the taxonomists' perception of what constitutes a genus differs between taxa? Tricky questions.

At the species level I get the distinct impression that those with a recorded worldwide distribution tend to belong to groups in which rather few taxonomic features are discernible. For nematodes, which I am most familiar with, this certainly seems to be true. Something like *Terschellingia longicaudata* has a global distribution whereas species belonging to groups with a more complex structure, for example the Cyatholaimids, have much more restricted distributions. I am suspicious that this results from a lack of taxonomic rigour. Some really bizarre species distribution patterns appear in the literature: for example the Atlantic deep-sea (>2000m) sharing nematode species with shallow waters in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe (including brackish water), Chile, Flo-

rida, Bermuda, Indonesia and the Maldive Islands. Frankly, I find this difficult to believe. In the biogeographical context another observation of Wilfried Westheide's is worrying, "that the percentage of morphologically highly similar but truly distinct species (= "sibling species") in the meiofauna obviously is much higher than previously expected". Wilfried cites a meiofaunal polychaete example but we can all think of "species" in our own fields of speciality which once were one and now are many, for example the harpacticoid copepods "*Tisbe furcata*" and "*Canuella perplexa*", or the nematode "*Paracanthonchus caecus*". This suggests to me that any biogeographical research on marine meiofauna must be left to the real taxonomic experts: it is not the province of general ecologists. If in any doubt at all about the identity of a species it should be recorded as "*Psammonus* sp.", otherwise any attempt at a biogeographic analysis will become meaningless.

This is not to imply that any research at the species level is outside the grasp of the non-specialist. In my experience many sibling species are not usually present in a single sample, and ecological dogma suggests that this should not be so. In studies of biodiversity it is not necessary to actually put names to species: "*Psammonus* sp. 1" and "*Psammonus* sp. 2" etc. is quite adequate. When applying multivariate analysis to survey data it is of course essential that a species is given the same identity wherever it is found, but again a species name is not really necessary. It is understandable that ecologists feel some sense of under-achievement if they publish their raw data tables with only tentative identifications like the above rather than firm species names. However, there should be no shame attached to this: better to lose a bit of pride than to confuse the biogeographic literature.

Richard Warwick

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

It is time to consider the election of new officers (Chairperson and Treasurer) for IAM, and the IAM council hereby solicits nominations from the membership. The three year term of the current office holders expires at the end of 1992. These are the most important positions in the society because they are responsible for all the affairs of the Association between the triennial Conferences: the chairperson produces *Psammonalia* and the Treasurer performs the financial duties. Therefore please consider these nominations carefully! Biographical sketches of the candidates and mail ballots will appear in the August is-

Olafsson
W. Armonies
Silva-Pike

sue. Send nominations to the Editor by July 1st, 1992. The council will canvass potential nominees to make sure they are willing to serve.

NEW MEMBERS

Patrick Buat

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TAHITI – POLYNESIE FRANCAISE

I am just beginning a PhD at the French University of South Pacific in the ORSTOM Centre of Papeete in Tahiti. I am working on the role and the importance of meiofauna in the energy and matter fluxes of atoll lagoons of the Tuamotu archipelago. This work is part of a programme on the energy cycle of atoll lagoons, carried out by an ORSTOM team. To begin with my work involves making the bionomy, density and biomass of the meiobenthic assemblages in relation to the main ecological factors. Later, I will study metabolism, mainly measuring oxygen consumption in the field and laboratory, on the different meiobenthic groups.

It is very difficult for me to get reprints in Tahiti so I would be pleased to receive these from anyone working on systematics, physiology or ecology of tropical pacific meiofauna.

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I have studied at the University of Gent where I took my degree in Biology and subsequently my masters thesis on meiobenthos in a mangrove in Gazi Bay. My current research, a PhD study, is focused on the ecology of the marine nematodes in the antarctic environment. The distribution, composition and feeding ecology of these animals are the main topics I am interested in. All this happens under the guidance of Dr. M. Vincx.

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NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Nicola Reiff writes from Germany:

I gave birth to a little girl (her name is Marina) on 26th December last year and she is taking up most of my time at present. In my spare time!!! I am finishing a project report on Chironomid pupal exuviae as biological indicators for the trophic state in the littoral of some Bavarian lakes. Because of my daughter I am working at home now so could any correspondence be addressed to my home at Aidenbachstrasse 111A, D-8000 Munchen 70, Germany.

Olivia Fernando writes from India:

At present I am working on the seasonal variation of ostracods and harpacticoids of an estuarine beach. I am interested in the taxonomy of meiofauna from Indian waters, especially Foraminifera, Harpacticoids and Ostracoda. I encounter difficulties in my work as I cannot find necessary literature and also lack basic know-how. I would be happy to extend my help to meiobenthologists who are interested in collaborative work.

As our library receives only very few journals, as does many other Institutes in India due to shortage of funds, *Psammonalia* is a very great help in keeping me up to date with meiofaunal research.

RAY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

The Society is in the process of publishing a translation of **Dr Sievert Lorenzen's** work on free-living nema-

todes which has been updated by **Dr Howard Platt**. The retail price of this work will be £45.00 [£20.00 including postage and packing to members of the Ray Society]. However, the Society is prepared to make it available as a prepublication offer to nematologists at the price of £30.00 plus £6.00 postage and packing, and restricted to one copy per individual. The publication date is intended to be the middle of 1992.

Anyone wishing to avail themselves of this offer should write direct to:

Dr N.J. Evans
The Ray Society
C/O British Museum (Natural History)
Cromwell Road
London SW7 5BD
U.K.

stating that they saw the announcement in *Psammonalia* No. 96 and enclosing payment.

OBITUARY

We are sorry to announce that **Louise Bush**, a long time member of IAM, died on February 3rd at Falmouth Memorial Hospital, Massachusetts. She was 84.

Louise was born in Wichita, Kansas and graduated from the Friends University in Wichita. She obtained her Masters degree at the University of Kansas and a doctorate at the University of Minnesota. She lived in Summit, New Jersey, for nearly 30 years and attained the post of Professor emeritus at Drew University in Madison New Jersey. She was a world renowned expert on Turbellarians and spent most of her summers doing research at Woods Hole Biological Laboratory. On her retirement in 1980, she moved to Falmouth and took up the post of Curator of the Grays Museum at MBL where she also catalogued her own research.

She leaves a son and daughter and three grandchildren.

SOCIAL COLUMN

Congratulations to **Laurence Guidi** who got married on March 14th. Her new name is **Laurence Guidi-Guilvard**.

CURRENT LITERATURE

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