

# PSAMMONALIA

Newsletter of the  
International Association of Meiobenthologists



Number 109, August 1995

Composed and Printed at The University of Texas at Austin,  
Marine Science Institute, Port Aransas, Texas U.S.A.

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## EDITORIAL

### Reflections on NIMCO

First, a heart-felt thanks to Alain Dinet and his co-workers (Philippe Albert, Jean-Yves Bodiou, Francis de Bovée, Nicole Coineau, Marie-Joséphine Dinet, Laurence Guidi-Guilvard, and Santiago Villora-Moreno) for putting on a wonderful conference in Perpignan, France. The meeting was held in a delightful setting and professionally run. As usual, the comradeship was especially enjoyable, and the mood was enhanced by the refreshments provided by the organizing committee. The cost of the conference to participants was very low because Alain was very successful at raising funds for the conference. In fact, he raised about FF55,000. The Association greatly appreciates the support from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Centre des Sciences de la Mer de L'Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Naturalia et Biologia, Région Languedoc-Roussillon, and Perpignan la Catalane.

Next, congratulations to the newly elected chairperson, Magda Vincx, and treasurer Ann Vanreusel. They will begin their 3-year term in January 1996. Let's all support them by sending lots of contributions in for *Psammonalia*.

The next congress will be for the Tenth International Meiofauna Conference. This conference will be hosted by Richard Warwick and Mike Gee in Plymouth, U.K. North Americans are disappointed that the conference will not be held here in three years, but we certainly hope that we will not have to wait 9 years for the next conference.

All together, about 115 people from 17 countries listened to 67 oral presentations and saw 33 poster presentations. The conference was opened by Alain Dinet who briefly reviewed the role of meiofauna in aquatic systems. This was followed by welcoming remarks from hosts representing the city of Perpignan, CNRS, and Laboratoire Arago. It strikes me that each time we meet new trends or paradigms emerge. This can happen in one of two ways: by either one novel presentation, or by several presentations that lead to a new consensus. The latter certainly happened during NIMCO. Two new trends were evident: the use of new tools in meiofaunal research and the importance of microphytobenthos to meiofauna.

There were several papers that employed new molecular techniques on meiofauna. For example, molecular tools were used to construct phylogenies of turbellarians, examine gastrotrich populations, and to look for harpacticoid population differentiation as a result of contaminant disturbance. These are exciting new approaches that will bring our research up to speed with

many other areas of biological research. The second new approach is used in toxicological studies. There were several examples on how meiofauna cultures and toxicity tests could be used to assess environmental quality or biological responses. We are all familiar with standard toxicity testing using sea urchin embryos or amphipods, but these organisms are either not exposed to pore-water or sediment bound pollutants or are exposed only the adult stage of their life cycle. It is refreshing to see a relevant tests being conducted on species that have short generation times and spend their entire life cycle in the benthos.

By sheer weight of the number of presentations, I counted nine, it appears that the microphytobenthos are firmly established as having a central role in the nutrition of meiofauna. Presentations of field and laboratory studies consistently demonstrated the dependence of meiofauna on microphytobenthos for food. At least this appears to be true in shallow water where diatom abundance and production is high. This has a profound implication. If meiofauna are primarily grazers, then they are part of the grazing food chain and not the detrital food chain. Also, meiofauna production would be primarily dependent on production of fresh organic material via autotrophy and not on the production of detritus via heterotrophy. Quite a thought!

Many other new ideas were presented at the meeting, the ones mentioned merely grabbed my attention. The production of new ideas and new directions in meiofauna research certainly demonstrates the our field is still a dynamic enterprise. Another indication of the growth and vigor of the field is student participation. I was very gratified that there was a large number of students in attendance, and that some of the very best papers were presented by students.

### NEW INITIATIVES FOR IAM

Two new initiatives resulted from the IAM business meeting in Perpignan during NIMCO. These were proposals for a split treasury, and an aggressive campaign to raise the endowment of the Swedmark Fund.

#### Assistant Treasurer

The dues for IAM are very low and cover only the reproduction and mailing of our newsletter *Psammonalia*. This creates a problem when small amounts of foreign currency must be converted. It often costs more to convert the money than the dues payment itself. We have tried to deal with this in the past by allowing members to submit three years worth of dues at once, or by paying at the

triennial meeting. This works fairly well, but there is still a loss to the treasury when currencies are converted. Our current treasurer, Robert Feller, has suggested that we create a North American Treasurer and a European Treasurer. This only solves part of the problem. But, about 30% of the members are in North America, and if a Common Market Bank can be found in Europe, then we might be able to cover 80% of the membership. I really don't know anything about European banks, but if we could find one that accepts credit cards or would convert currency at low or no expense, then a permanent treasury in that country would have great economic benefit to the Association. If we could find a low cost credit card that would be ideal, because credit card conversion rates are excellent, and there is no conversion fee. The creation of an assistant to the treasurer would also make much more easy for a team from Asia or South American to take over the chair and treasury someday. We need help. Do any of you have any ideas or suggestions?

Lacking any better suggestions, we will create an assistant treasurer, which would alternate with the alternation of *Psammonalia*. Initially, one treasury would remain in Europe and one would remain in the U.S. Robert Feller has agreed to remain as the Assistant Treasurer for North America for the next three years. Ann Vanreusel will be the Association Treasurer in Europe for the next three years. Ann would oversee operation of both treasuries and be responsible for reporting fiscal matters to the Association. The European treasury has already been started with dues that were collected in Perpignan. There should be enough money going into both treasuries to support *Psammonalia* when the newsletter moves to and from each continent. There is at least one bad aspect of this plan. Since, the Swedmark Fund remains in England, our money will be split three ways.

Finally, this change will require an amendment to our bylaws. See the accompanying article.

*Raising the Swedmark Fund*

The Swedmark Fund is an endowment for the Association that was started in 1992 by an amendment to the constitution and bylaws. According to the constitution, only 75% of the income from the endowment can be used for operations of the Association. An endowment for operation of the Association is a very wise long-term investment in the future. Hopefully, IAM will be around 100 years from now, and our children's grandchildren will remark on how wise we were to create such an endowment. This will ensure the long-term health and survival of both the Association and *Psammonalia*. The bylaws state that the income from the Fund should be used

to support student travel to the triennial conference. Since the corpus of the Fund is low, we did not have enough income to support travel to the meeting in Perpignan. For the plan to work, we must increase the size of the Swedmark Fund as rapidly as possible. After much discussion, it was decided that we could hold raffles at the triennial conference banquets for the benefit of the fund. This added an element of fun as well as fund-raising to the banquet. It was obviously everyone enjoyed this event. Ironically, Mike Gee, the chairman of the Swedmark Fund Committee also won the raffle. Mike got to take home the prize, a rare volume by Claude Delamare-Deboutville as well as proceeds from the raffle. I strongly urge that conveners of future meetings encourage participants to bring donations (e.g., books, reprints, t-shirts, baseball caps, or anything else that would entice donations from members) to the conference for the drawing. We had only one prize at the recent banquet, but I can envision a fun evening with quite a few prizes. This tactic would not require any changes in our bylaws or governance procedures.

**SWEDMARK FUND UPDATE**

The first IAM raffle to benefit the Swedmark Fund was held in Perpignan. Mike Gee reports that the proceeds of the raffle converted into 225 pounds and the gifts from members of 280 dollars converted into 163.17 pounds. With these two nice boosts the fund now stands at 1848.44 pounds.

Thanks to the following people for contributing to the fund since January 1993:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| N. Lyke            | P. Barnett      |
| M. Hariri          | A. Vanreusel    |
| J. Fleeger         | M. Bergmans     |
| K. Carman          | A. Robertson    |
| P. Aceret          | M. Gowing       |
| K. Walters         | D. Zinn         |
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| L. Villiers        | T. Radziejewska |
| K. Kito            | H. Adao         |
| M. Gee             | W. Sterrer      |
| M. Reiper-Kirchner |                 |

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

The following first draft of a new bylaw is recommended to the Association by Robert Feller and Paul Montagna. Discussion on the proposed bylaw will be accepted prior

to the publication of the November newsletter. Please provide your comments to Paul Montagna prior to November so that your input can be incorporated into the final draft of the new bylaw. The final draft of the new bylaw will be printed in the November newsletter for a referendum by the membership.

#### *Proposed Bylaw 6. Assistant Treasurer*

The Treasurer may appoint an Assistant Treasurer to collect dues without conversion loss. Appointment of the Assistant Treasurer must be approved by the Chairperson. The Assistant Treasurer may also pay expenses, transfer funds to the Treasurer, or perform other duties as requested by the Treasurer with the approval of the Chairperson. The Assistant Treasurer reports financial records to the Treasurer, who reports to the Association.

### XIMCO?

Well, done with one, and on to the next. The next conference will be the Tenth International Meiofauna Conference. We can call it TIMCO, or use the roman numeral X, and call it XIMCO (which is pronounced as zimco). Mike Gee reports that he has already booked the conference center at the University of Plymouth for the week of 27th to 31st July 1998. Put these dates in their diary now. Registration will be on Sunday 26th July and accommodation will be in the University hall immediately adjacent to the conference center.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### *Membership Services*

Many members paid dues at NIMCO, but did not receive a receipt. All membership dues collected at NIMCO are listed on the last page of the newsletter. Please use this as a receipt.

#### *Systematic Biology Network*

The European Science Foundation offers an exciting new opportunity to bring systematics together as a closely knit community that can develop a powerful and influential voice in European science. The ESF Network in Systematic Biology will run for three years. It recognises the global importance of European biological and palaeontological collections and the special scientific strengths that Europe could contribute to tackling the biodiversity crisis. More than half the world's biological

collections are in European systematic institutions.

The primary purpose of the ESF Network is to stimulate communication and collaboration between the scientists working in what have been traditionally separate disciplines. The specific objectives of the Network include:

- Unite European systematists through good communication.
- Define and mobilise Europe's contribution to tackling the scientific challenges of biodiversity.
- Consider new developments in systematic theory, practice and application.
- Explore the relationship between morphological and molecular systematics.
- Produce policy papers on systematic priorities.
- Establish priorities for and consider ways of promoting the training of systematists.
- Provide a platform for worldwide cooperation among systematists.

The chairperson of the Coordination committee is Prof. S. Blackmore (The Natural History Museum, London). More information (including free subscription to the network) is available on the e-mail line of Nicola Donlon, London (nd@nhm.ac.uk; FAX 0171 938 9506) or on the e-mail line of Magda Vincx (magda.vincx@rug.ac.be; FAX 32 0 9 2645210).

#### *13th International Estuarine Research Federation Conference*

The 1995 conference will be held November 12-16, 1995 in at the Marriott Bayfront Hotel (900 North Shoreline Boulevard, (800) 874-4585) in Corpus Christi, Texas (78401 USA) where every room has a breathtaking view of Corpus Christi Bay. The purpose of the conference is to exchange information on all aspects of research, management and public policy regarding estuaries. The theme, "Estuaries: bridges from watersheds to coastal seas," reflects recent emphasis on the central role that estuaries have in coupling the movement of materials between the land and the coastal zone. Because of this role, basic research into estuarine ecosystem processes is a priority with local, state, and the federal governments as they grapple with declining and degrading natural resources. This conference will provide an opportunity for researchers, managers, policy makers and educators to come together to exchange information on these important issues. The ERF biennial conference is expected to attract about 800 people. The program will include daily plenary speakers, and five concurrent sessions.

Social events with South Texas themes are planned. The conference will begin Sunday with the President's Welcome Reception, featuring Mexican appetizers and a Mariachi Band to put us in a festive southwestern mood. The Affiliates Reception will be held on Tuesday night at the Texas State Aquarium, featuring local seafood appetizers. On Wednesday night, there will be a dinner/dance at the Bar B Q Man, a local restaurant with an outdoor stage, volley ball court, and horseshoe pit.

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Register now to avoid late charges that increase costs after 1 October 1995. Non-member fees are higher, so join ERF for discounts. Social registration for attendee's guests is available. Please reserve rooms directly with the hotel before 20 October 1995: Corpus Christi Marriott Bayfront, 900 North Shoreline Boulevard, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401, (800) 874-4585. Ask for ERF'95 rates: \$89 per night (+ 13% tax) for up to four people.

You can obtain announcements, and abstract and registration forms by mail, ERF'95, University of Texas Marine Science Institute, P.O. Box 1267, Port Aransas, Texas 78373; e-mail, erf95@utmsi.zo.utexas.edu; or fax, (512)749-6777.

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← Microphytobenthos  
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## THANKS

This issue of *Psammonalia* came about due to the efforts of many individuals. The editorial staff thanks the following members for their contributions:

Bruce Coull  
Robert Feller  
Preben Jensen  
Mike Gec

**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. The next International Conference will be July 3-7, 1995 in Perpignan, France.

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Muthumbi, Agnes	3	135			
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Palacin, Cruz	2	90			
Parsla, Pallo	1	45			
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