Editorial

Looking forward to another successful year

My first year as an Editor-in-Chief of Proceedings B has gone quickly, mainly because it is such an interesting and rewarding role. My previous experience as an Associate Editor of a journal was in the pre-email era when everything was dealt with via paper copy. The electronic tools we now have streamlined the whole process to an amazing degree. It has meant that Proceedings B is able to publish papers rapidly—our latest figure for the average time from submission to publication is 60 days, which compares well with the figure of 68 days for 2008. Other statistics indicate that the journal continues in good health. The submission rate in 2009 at the time of this going to press has increased by 26 per cent over the same period in 2008 and our latest impact factor has risen to 4.248. As I mentioned in my first Editorial (Hassell 2009), the past year has seen a change in the workflow involved in reviewing the submitted manuscripts. We have retained a group of Editors, but the previous Board Members have become Associate Editors with more responsibilities in selecting referees and making final recommendations to an Editor. The clear impression I have is that this change is working well and that the Associate Editors appreciate the increased involvement with the journal.

During 2009, we published a special issue on ‘Geographic range limits of species’ (Gaston 2009), following on from the very successful 2008 special issue, entitled ‘Evolutionary dynamics of wild populations’ (Kruuk & Hill 2008). In our next volume, we will be publishing a further special issue on ‘Recent advances in Chinese palaeontology’ (Xu et al. in press). While these special issues have proved successful and attracted a great deal of interest, we have decided not to continue with this format. Instead, we are planning to introduce special features within the particular issues of the journal. These will be the collections of a number of research papers on a particular topic within a few issues of the journal each year. A member of the Editorial Board will be charged with coordinating each special feature. The Review articles that we regularly publish are very popular with our readership and will not be affected by these changes.

While Proceedings B is widely recognized for its focus on evolutionary biology, ecology and behaviour, we remain keen to broaden the scope of the papers we publish, particularly in the fields of neuroscience, molecular biology and cognition. It is encouraging that several papers in these areas have appeared in the top 25 most cited papers published in Proceedings B so far in 2009. It is a little invidious to select among these but, anyway, some examples within the molecular biology category include Van Oosterhout (2009) and Jurado-Rivera et al. (2009); and in neurobiology and cognition include Gonzalez-Voyer et al. (2009), Taylor et al. (2009) and Wright et al. (2009). Having said this, we always wish to encourage high-quality papers from all areas of Biology. Any views from our authors and readers on the content of Proceedings B or how we run the journal will always be very much appreciated.

Michael Hassell
Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCES