

## Editorial

Ralph Harbach has done a great job as editor of *Systematic Entomology*: mostly alone, he improved the reputation of the journal and strengthened its position as the top systematic entomology journal in the world. Now he has decided after eight years to step down. A team of two editors replaces him. Frank Krell (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/entomology/staffpages/fkrell.html>) from The Natural History Museum, London, is the new U.K. editor, responsible for all beetle papers and papers submitted from Europe and Asia. Peter Cranston (<http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/faculty/cranston.html>) previously from The Natural History Museum, and CSIRO, Canberra, Australia, and now at the University of California in Davis is also a new editor, with responsibility for all Diptera papers and those submitted from the rest of the world.

The period from acceptance to publishing a paper in *Systematic Entomology* is currently approximately six months, but time elapsed from submission inevitably varies with numbers of manuscripts and depends on the continued goodwill of a geographically disparate pool of referees. In this age of rapid electronic communication, reliance on ever-more expensive yet increasingly unreliable postal services is anachronistic. A dedicated electronic system for manuscript submission and communications between authors, referees and editors is essential. This is not simply because the technology is available: as authors we have found great benefits, particularly in the ability to track the status of manuscripts from receipt of submission through to publication; as referees the benefits are as evident, with minimization of paper handling and reduced reliance on the postal services. Now in our new role as editors we accept the very positive reports from other editors already using dedicated systems – handling time is greatly reduced, and all aspects of submission, refereeing, editorial decision making, and resubmission are greatly facilitated. Instructions for using the Blackwell-preferred ManuscriptCentral system will be found in new instructions to authors on the inside back cover in subsequent issues of the journal, and at the Blackwell journal site. Traditional submission will be allowed for those without the means to submit electronically, and this procedure will not disadvantage authors. The scope of the journal will be unchanged. We aim to attract the top manuscripts from those researching into systematics of insects, especially where the work addresses potential readership in a wider scientific community. We envisage audiences as including all those interested in biogeography, palaeoentomology, insect-plant relationships, medical and veterinary entomology, biocontrol, biodiversity studies, and in every pursuit in which a phylogenetic framework is essential for applications. To this end we have asked our editorial board to take a proactive role in seeking out such studies, and have complemented the board by welcoming Rolf Beutel (University

of Jena, Germany; Coleoptera), Thierry Bourgoin (Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; Hemiptera), Rudolf Meier (Zoological Museum Copenhagen and National University of Singapore; Diptera), Stefan Schmidt (Zoologische Staatssammlung, Munich, Germany; Hymenoptera) and Bradley Sinclair (Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany; Diptera) to our team. Alpha-taxonomic papers will be considered for publication in the journal only if novel or otherwise interesting methods are used, or groups of wide interest are considered and the results of general interest. This does not mean that we consider alpha-taxonomy as of lower importance or quality, but simply that it lies outside the central scope of *Systematic Entomology*.

We try not to be dogmatic about approaches. A good phylogenetic analysis following the Hennigian method is acceptable and encouraged (if the selection and weighting of synapomorphies is explicit) as well as a sound pattern cladistic analysis (if the character definition is equally explicit). Electronic submission of data matrices will allow referees readily to verify authors' conclusions. We welcome submissions of both molecular and morphological papers, but encourage combined approaches if practical. In papers analysing only one side of the spectrum, we expect consideration of already published results from the other side.

Publishers, job panels and many authors admire high impact factors. The impact factor of *Systematic Entomology* is high for a systematics journal and we want to maintain or increase it. However, we are aware that this kind of measurement poorly reflects the real impact of a systematics journal. Undeniably, it is completely useless in taxonomy (Krell, 2002), for some reasons that apply also to systematics. Therefore, if an increase in the impact factor comes about, so be it, but our broad aim is to attract a highest proportion of the world's top manuscripts in systematic entomology. Thus, we encourage submission not only of studies on taxa that will increase citation rate (such as pests or vectors), but also wish to see sound, comprehensive (but succinct) systematic treatments of any insect group. Finally, we expect you to interest our readers at the outset, so please don't hide the reason for your study deep in the Discussion. Therefore, we ask that you convey your enthusiasm for your entomological research through a broadly informative as well as stimulating abstract and introduction. Then please send us your manuscripts, preferably electronically.

PETER S. CRANSTON & FRANK-THORSTEN KRELL

### Reference

Krell, F.-T. (2002) Reasons why impact factors don't work for taxonomy. Its long-term relevance, few specialists and lack of core journals put it outside ISI criteria. *Nature*, **415**, 957.

