

## Editorial

### And now for something not completely different

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Evolutionary ecology flexes its intellectual muscles perhaps more strongly than any other specialty in integrative biology. Its mix of pattern discovery, theory and empiricism make it a paragon of all that science hopes for itself. Yet, evolutionary ecologists must work simultaneously in two specialties of biology.

Not a hen and not a rooster. If ever a science wanted its work to fall into a crack, that would seem to be an ideal recipe. So, in 1985, I proposed a journal in evolutionary ecology to Alan Crowden of Chapman & Hall. Standing squarely in the middle of our own plank, I reckoned we would have no crack to swallow us up. We could turn that plank back into a limb and go out on it as far as we dared! And so we did.

But times have changed. Commercial publishers have been forced more and more to maximize their profits – even at the expense of circulation. Prices and profits have soared. Today, profits have attained an astonishing level, unmatched by almost any other type of corporation (M.J. McCabe, ‘The impact of publisher mergers on journal prices: A preliminary report,’ pp. 3–7 in *ARL: A Bimonthly Newsletter of Research Library Issues and Actions*, October 1998; B.J. Wily, ‘Competition in scholarly publishing? What publisher profits reveal,’ pp. 7–13 in the same issue).

We who work so much with optimizing functions and constraints can understand the market forces pressing commercial publishers. But we scientists do not face their constraints. And profit is not our primary goal. Instead, all of us – editors and authors alike – want, first and foremost, to communicate knowledge. We want to maximize the number of scientists, scholars and students who have access to our articles. Library and personal budget limits mean that, to maximize access, we must sacrifice most of the profit.

That is why *Evolutionary Ecology Research* will be as inexpensive as we can make it. It will also be extraordinarily liberal in its dissemination rules. It will stress the advancement of knowledge above all else.

In 1989, when Eddy van der Maarel and his colleagues began *The Journal of Vegetation Science*, they also wanted to increase access to knowledge. *The Journal of Vegetation Science* is our role model – the pioneer we will try to emulate.

The Association of Research Libraries is helping. Their project, SPARC – which we are proud to call our partner – will foster the publication of competitively priced, alternative journals. We scientists must support these by sending them our most exciting work and encouraging our libraries to subscribe to them. *EER*'s cover will bear the SPARC seal of approval. If you want a bird and a flower, you will have to pay for that other journal.

Michael L. Rosenzweig

