

that both will become mainstream. *JAEH* states explicitly that it aims to publish research with a holistic perspective, so it ought to be in the best position to exploit this 'holistic market'. But, on the basis of the number of unsolicited papers published, it seems that *Ecotoxicology* is attracting the most interest. □

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Cooperate, diverge or die?

Colin B. Munn

Journal of Marine Biotechnology. Editors J. T. Baker, H. O. Halvorson, Y. LeGal, Y. Okami and S. Miyachi. Springer. 4/yr. \$108 (institutional); \$80 (personal).

WHAT exactly is biotechnology? Is it the application of molecular 'biotechnological' methods to investigate basic questions in biology or is it specifically concerned with industrial applications that exploit biological resources? I recall all sorts of semantic discussions during the emergence of the 'new' biotechnology in the late 1970s and 1980s, catalysed by the developments in recombinant DNA technology. The question becomes important when one asks whether there really is a discipline of 'marine biotechnology', and whether research should be focused under this heading or under the specific sub disciplines, such as microbiology, algology, fish biology, invertebrate studies and the many other areas relevant to the

marine biosphere.

The term 'marine biotechnology' probably first came into use in the mid-1980s, and in 1989 the first international symposium on the topic was held in Japan. This successful venture now seems to be established as a regular triennial event, with subsequent meetings in the United States and Norway. There is clearly a body of scientists who share a common interest in this exciting topic, which holds much promise for an increased basic understanding of the marine environment and for the potential use of resources. This is the rationale behind the launch of this journal. The stated aims are to provide a central information source and forum for scientists working in this field, and to focus on the industrial use of marine bioresources.

The journal is good value and well produced, with an attractive clear layout. Most of the original papers are clear and concise (3-6 printed pages). There are also excellent short mini-reviews, which are particularly useful for promoting interdisciplinary awareness. "Rapid Communications", a section for publication of new results of special interest, is especially welcome. The date of receipt of manuscripts is not recorded, so it is impossible to judge the normal publication time for papers. There also seems to be the opportunity for editorial comments and correspondence. The editorial board consists of distinguished experts across a wide range of relevant disciplines.

An obvious comparison must be made with the other new journal in this field, *Molecular Marine Biology and Biotechnology*, reviewed in last year's New Journals supplement (*Nature* 571, 576; 1993). There is a definite need for a single forum for gathering together work related to this growing field. If both journals are to

thrive, I suspect that they will need to develop rather different philosophies and approaches. *Journal of Marine Biotechnology* would be best focused on applications — the industrial use of marine organisms and environmental processes and remediation — whereas *Marine Molecular Biology and Biotechnology* should concentrate on more basic studies that use molecular methods to investigate topics such as biodiversity and marine ecology. It would be even better if the publishers were to collaborate to produce a single comprehensive journal — that really would be useful! It is encouraging that they have already agreed to cooperate in the publication of the proceedings of the 1994 International Marine Biotechnology Conference, held last month in Tromsø, Norway. □

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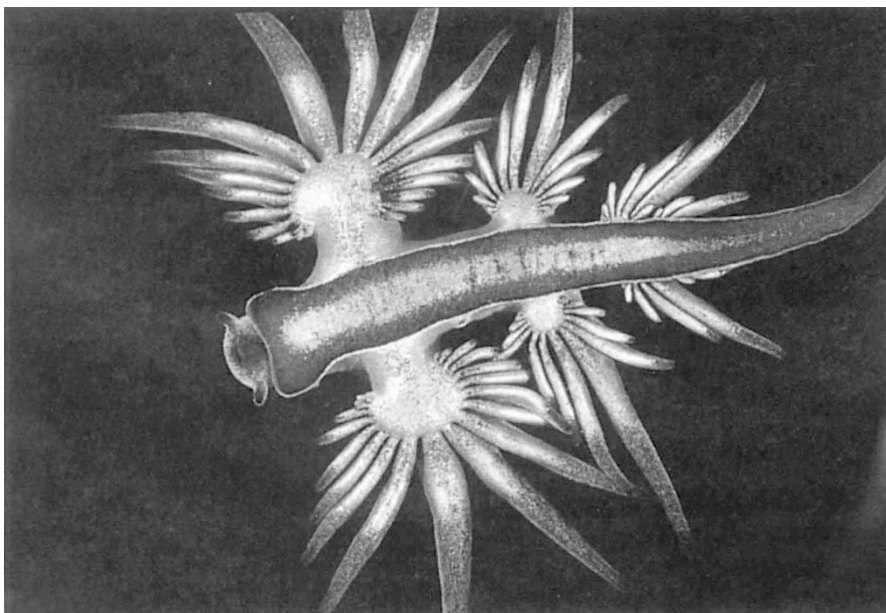
Scarcity or abundance?

Michael B. Usher

Biodiversity and Conservation. Editor-in-chief Alan T. Bull and Ian R. Swingland. Chapman and Hall. 6/yr. Europe £190, USA and Canada \$325, elsewhere £200 (institutional); Europe £55, USA and Canada \$99, elsewhere £55 (personal). **Biology and Environment: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.** Editors Martin Steer and Paul Giller. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. 3/yr. IR£90 (institutional); IR£25 (personal).

MANY journals have seen the need for snappier titles — long-established journals have shortened their names, and newly published journals have chosen short titles. This trend is seen with these two journals, one new and one old with a new name.

Biology and Environment was launched in March 1993 as "an honourable successor to the original Section B". It aims to have a wide remit spanning "the internal structure and function of living systems on the one hand and investigations of the ecosystem and biosphere levels on the other". The papers appear to have two particular foci: ecological and ecotoxicological studies. These are not, however, the only subjects covered: there are papers on biochemistry of fish muscle, a database for peatlands, parasites of two trout species, and palaeoecology in western Donegal. Despite this disparity of topics there is a common theme; the Irishness of all of the studies. I previously had no idea about the amount of research in Ireland on the otter (*Lutra lutra*), a species that is the subject of eight of the 33 papers



Nudibranch or naked sea slug *Glaucus atlanticus*, a marine gastropod mollusc found on the sea bed, principally in the Atlantic.