

EDITORIAL

The present special issue of the RAFFLES BULLETIN OF ZOOLOGY commemorates 40 years of the Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore. The department was established in 1950, in the then University of Malaya. The Singapore campus of the University of Malaya became a separate entity, the University of Singapore, in 1961. The restructuring of tertiary institutions led to the merger of the University of Singapore and Nanyang University in 1980, to form the National University of Singapore.

In 1972, with the reorganisation of the National Museum, the Department of Zoology made an important acquisition - the zoological collections of the Raffles Museum. It has since become known as the Zoological Reference Collection, an important part of the Department of Zoology.

Over the past four decades, there has been a gradual shift in emphasis in zoological research - from the more "traditional" systematic/ecological disciplines to cell- and gene-based studies in universities throughout the world. The development of such disciplines in the Department of Zoology however, has not been at the expense of systematic and ecological work. In species-rich areas like Southeast Asia, long-term neglect of the systematic and ecological sciences can have serious repercussions on the management of its biological resources.

The present issue comprises eight technical papers, six by staff members of the Department of Zoology working on Southeast Asian zoology; and two by foreign scientists (Jorgen Lützen, Åse Jespersen, David Wooldridge) working on Singapore fauna.

A separate publication of the Department of Zoology, in conjunction with its 40th Anniversary, is the ESSAYS IN ZOOLOGY (ISBN 9971-62-253-X; L. M. Chou and P. K. L. Ng, Editors). This compilation of semi-technical and technical papers by past and present members of the zoology department staff gives a good perspective to the range of research conducted in the department.

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