

Advancing *Frontiers*, with a retrospective

The first issue of a new volume of *Frontiers of Biogeography*, following soon after a Biennial meeting of the *International Biogeography Society (IBS)*, provides a timely opportunity to take stock of achievements and to chart the new course for the journal. We aim to do this in two installments: first a brief retrospective herein, followed by a prospective in the next issue.

Frontiers of Biogeography is now seven issues, and not quite two years, old (the first issue was published in September 2009). During this period, we have maintained an average of over 30 pages per issue of diverse content, including opinions and perspectives, book reviews, news and comment on the current literature, and updates for the *IBS* membership. That level of output, although small by the standards of an established journal, is a testament to the support of *IBS* members in submitting articles and a dedicated editorial team. We take this opportunity to thank this team of editors, who are listed inside the cover of all the issues of the journal. Many of them are early-career scientists with a great enthusiasm for our subject: key members of the next generation of leading biogeographers. It is great to have such dynamic, motivated people involved.

A key part of our mission is inherited from the antecedent *IBS Newsletter*: to abet communication among all the members of *IBS*. The membership corner remains a pillar of that mission, in partnership with the *IBS* blog, facebook, and twitter sites. We have been able to bring some of the latest content from the diverse biogeography literature to your laptop, including discussion of topics in the peer-reviewed literature. With the Wiley–Blackwell biogeography journals discontinuing their book reviews about four years ago, *Frontiers* is now the place to look for reviews of, and information about, books in our field; the recent appointment of Markus Eichhorn as Book Reviews Editor has made this a strong feature of the journal. We also bring early delivery of ideas gestating within the minds of a series of highly regarded interviewees; the interview with Robert E. Ricklefs in this issue brings up to date the series on Alfred

Russel Wallace Award winners.

In this vein, the current issue again engages with some of the very latest in biogeography in a series of reports from the 5th Biennial International Conference of the *IBS*, convened in Heraklion, Crete. Each report provides a summary of cutting-edge topics within the field, but we suggest there are gems hidden in these reports that emerge most clearly when reading the entire issue's contents in quick succession, regardless of speciality. Several common themes spring out. To choose just two examples, the importance of body size (see the summaries of the *Two Lenses*, *Hot Topics*, and *Marine Biogeography* symposia) and the role of ecology in species distributions (*Two Lenses* and *Marine Biogeography* symposia) have a large presence across nominally distant disciplines. Additionally, the *Conservation Biology* and *Palaeoecology* summaries explicitly draw links between symposia. These glimpses of transversality are evidence that, by bringing together biogeographers from different areas of research, the *IBS* meetings are facilitating a multidisciplinary exchange from which conceptual syntheses can emerge. But also, reading the book reviews and interview, we are led to consider the merits of practising biogeography in different ways: focusing on place, question or taxon, using shallow sampling with great breadth or sampling intensely with depth. In this issue we have the added opportunity of viewing one symposium through the eyes of both the organizers and two student attendees (fittingly, this is the *Two Lenses* symposium on biogeography and ecology). The diversity of points of view, conceptual and methodological approaches and research topics provided by these discussions, in print, represents the vitality of the meeting, the society and the discipline they seek to represent.

Thus, as *IBS* continues to establish itself as a scientific society, *Frontiers of Biogeography* also is evolving to take on a broader role in communicating biogeography. Our long-standing series of contributed opinion and perspective articles (now highlighted on the *Frontiers of Biogeography*

homepage) is providing a venue for conceptual developments in biogeography; we particularly encourage you to consider submitting papers like these. Importantly, these articles published in *Frontiers of Biogeography* (or previously in the *IBS Newsletter*) are already being cited in the mainstream literature (e.g. see Hawkins & DeVries 2009, Beck & Sieber 2010, Morales-Castilla et al. 2011, Peterson 2011), a quickly accomplished objective test of quality for any nascent journal.

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