

Editorial

The diversity of life on the planet Earth is still one of the great unknowns. We humans now know the number of base pairs and genes in our genomes, yet we are not able to say how many species have been described, let alone how many species there are at this moment on Earth. Indeed, Edward O. Wilson (2000, *Science* 289: 2279) has called for the next megaproject of human civilization to be "a concerted effort, comparable to the Human Genome Project (HGP), to complete a global diversity survey -- pole to pole, whales to bacteria, and in a reasonable short period of time". In addition to how many species there are, we need to know where those species occur and what they do. Knowing these three things will help us gain a meaningful understanding of why life on Earth is the way that it is.

Entomologica Fennica plays a role in disseminating information on the taxonomy and ecology of insects in the northern areas of our planet. That role has been under threat for some time as funding has to be applied for annually, without any guarantee of receiving it. Nonetheless, *Entomologica Fennica* is a widely cited journal that deserves better recognition from the funding agencies. As the new Editor-in-Chief of this journal, I shall endeavour to streamline the journal's scope and broaden its horizon.

Entomologica Fennica (and its predecessors *Annales Entomologici Fennici* and *Notulae Entomologicae*) has traditionally been a forum for Finnish researchers to publish the results of their research. As a concession, foreigners have been allowed to publish work dealing with insects in the boreal region. This has led to a confusing situation where non-Finns have submitted manuscripts on interesting work carried out in nonboreal regions, because the authors had based their choice of journal on previously published articles in *Entomologica Fennica*. This situation is no longer desirable. *Entomologica Fennica* is an international journal and its contents should reflect it. There are several Finnish entomological journals that are excellent forums for publishing work that is mainly of interest to Finland (e.g. *Baptria*, *Sahlbergia*).

What should the contents of *Entomologica Fennica* then look like? While I am not yet calling for an immediate change in the scope of the journal, I propose that this journal should more strongly be a source of information on the taxonomy, systematics, biogeography and ecology of Holarctic insects and other selected terrestrial arthropods. While it is clear that the larger part of the unknown diversity of insects occurs in the tropics, there is still much to be discovered in the more northern latitudes. I have identified three topics that are of broad interest to entomologists around the world: systematics and taxonomy, biogeography and faunistics, and the basic ecology (i.e. natural history) of insects.

The systematics and taxonomy of organisms form the basis of all evolutionary and ecological work. There is no point in conducting biological research without the knowledge of what one is studying. *Entomologica Fennica* has published a lot of good taxonomic work, and this will continue. I would also like to see more research on the systematics of largely Holarctic insects being published in this journal.

Entomologica Fennica has also published many Brief Reports on species new to Finland. As I mentioned earlier, one important aspect of understanding the diversity of this planet is knowing what occurs where. The value of faunistic reports should not be underestimated. However, faunistic reports should always be from one region. There is no sense, in my opinion, in reporting species new to different biological regions in the same paper. Also, rather than reports

on single new species to certain countries, I would like to see more comprehensive reports of largely unknown insect faunas.

The basic ecology of many insect species is still unknown, even in the well-studied northern areas of the planet. Information on the length of life cycles, host plants/animals, larval and adult behaviours, etc. are crucial to many evolutionary studies comparing related species. Entomologica Fennica is an excellent forum for such descriptive and essential work.

In summary, Entomologica Fennica is now heading towards a more global perspective. Given that insects are the most diverse of all organisms, restricting the global perspective to the Holarctic region will not in any way lessen the impact of this journal. All of the above are my personal thoughts and I am open to discussion on the future of Entomologica Fennica. I look forward to seeing your manuscripts!

Niklas Wahlberg
Editor-in-Chief