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EDITORIAL

Volumes 23 and 24, and whither *Environmental Conservation?*

The first volume of this journal that I have edited is now complete. This is an appropriate place for me to thank those many people who brought you volume 23. Hazel Harrison, and latterly her replacement during maternity leave, Gillian Wilson, helped me to cope. Without all those authors (51 of them!), the content would not have attained the heights of comprehensiveness and quality that it did. I must not forget either the 36 Meeting Reporters (thank you Mary Bythell for coordinating these), nor those 18 Book Reviewers, and certainly not the eight Commentators, who helped further to broaden our outlook on environmental science. I am indebted to my Associate Editors, Arthur Westing and Nico Schrijver, for their valuable Editorials, and thank another Associate Editor, Garry Trompf, for helping enormously with the 'Letter from Belarus' which was authored by Ivan Antanovich. Martin Holdgate offered significant guidance and support, most notably with my second Editorial, in 23(2). Even less sung as heroes are the referees, some 50 of whom helped to vet those papers which were ultimately accepted for publication in this volume. Twice as many again toiled over papers which proved unpublishable, but I feel no less indebted to them either for their vigilance. Then there has been the team at Cambridge University Press, without whom, again, we could not have come so far in such a short space of time.

This is now the second volume that I will have edited in the 24th year in the life of this journal, which my father, Nicholas Polunin Sr, founded. In this issue, the geographical foundations remain very broad. There are two papers focused on South America (Fearnside and Sarmiento), three considering problems in southern Asia (Shively, Kundu & Ghose, and Fox & Atok), and two based on work in Europe (Bashkin and Pyrovetsi & Daoutopoulos), while two are essentially global in import (Fielding & Bell and Kawashima *et al*.). In disciplinary terms, there are two with major implications for knowledge of the sources and impacts of pollution (Bashkin and Fearnside), two which report findings important to assessment of habitat restoration (Sarmiento and Kundu & Ghose), four with valuable messages for assessing impacts of people (Shively, Pyrovetsi & Daoutopoulos, and Fox & Atok) and economic development (Kawashima *et al*.), and one on a problem in assessing biological distributional data (Fielding & Bell). As usual, there are Meeting Reports from around the world, and a wide-ranging set of Book Reviews as well.

What gaps are there in our attempt to be an, if not the, international journal of environmental science? Since people are the origin of 'environmental problems' and the object therefore of most 'environmental management', I am pleased that there are many people-oriented papers coming in, but rather few of these are addressing what I would consider are core issues of population growth, impacts and control. Since legal instruments of all kinds are such an important starting-point for environmental conservation, I would like to see more papers especially on international law. Amilien's and Brunnée & Nollkaemper's papers have been valuable in this regard, although Nico Schrijver's Editorial reminded us that the role of the sovereign state in 'environmental conservation' will not necessarily decline. Surely we need to be better informed of the spiritual and ethical aspects? As a natural scientist I shall hope for a complement of 'data-rich' papers too! Authoritative Comments on the environmental problems of particular areas around the world could be enlightening. If you have your ideas as to what this journal should be doing to address its scope more fully, please get in touch; I welcome your views.

Nicholas V.C. Polunin
Editor

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