

# Journal of the Marine Biological Association of India

Abbreviation : *J. mar. biol. Ass. India*

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Vol. 25

June 1983

No. 1 & 2

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## THE MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA : A QUARTER CENTURY OF SERVICE TO SCIENCE

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THE INITIATIVE to organise the Marine Biological Association of India was taken by Dr. S. Jones, former Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam Camp in 1958, who was faced with the problem of finding suitable publication media for the steadily increasing number of scientific papers that were being brought out by his colleagues. It was formally inaugurated on 3rd January 1959 with head quarters at Mandapam Camp, Tamil Nadu, India. The main objectives of the Association as enunciated then were to promote the cause of marine sciences in the Indian region "(a) by organising lectures, symposia and seminars on specific subjects, (b) by offering requisite information to research workers and students undergoing training in marine biological sciences, (c) by publishing a journal, which shall be called the JOURNAL OF THE MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA, (d) by issuing occasional memoirs and monographs, (e) by instituting fellowships and studentships and aiding expeditions and (f) by instituting prizes to be awarded in recognition of outstanding

contributions towards the advancement of the marine biological sciences from the research workers of India, as funds permit." It may be stated here with a great degree of satisfaction that the history of the Association will show that, in the course of the years that have passed by, these objectives have been achieved to an extent that we rarely come across, thanks to the cooperative efforts of all associated with it.

The Association enjoys a unique position among the organisations of its kind with diverse activities in the field of marine sciences and now has a membership of 586, including individual and institutional membership from all over the world (Table 1).

The most important activity of the Association has been the publication of the journal which had won international acclaim right from its inception mainly due to the meticulous care with which it is brought out, the high standard of its scientific papers and the regularity of its publication. It has been an important

means of communication of the results of contributions made by scientists within the country and abroad. The very wide circulation the world over, and the demand for the journal testifies to its standard as one of the foremost journals on marine biological sciences in the world. So far, the Association has published 24 volumes of the Journal, and the papers

and development of new apparatus related to marine sciences.

The Association can take credit that based on the initiative taken by Dr. S. Jones, its Founder President a Dugong Research and Conservation Fund was organised in 1959 under its auspices and steps were taken to establish a sanctuary

TABLE 1. *Details of membership from 1970 through 1985*

| Year | Life Member |         | Indian     |             | Foreign    |             | Total |
|------|-------------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------|
|      | Indian      | Foreign | Individual | Institution | Individual | Institution |       |
| 1970 | 31          | 13      | 328        | 74          | 116        | 212         | 774   |
| 1971 | 29          | 15      | 259        | 31          | 40         | 97          | 471   |
| 1972 | 33          | 15      | 273        | 76          | 65         | 206         | 668   |
| 1973 | 35          | 15      | 311        | 94          | 96         | 237         | 788   |
| 1974 | 35          | 15      | 120        | 93          | 174        | 281         | 718   |
| 1975 | 38          | 17      | 252        | 96          | 137        | 263         | 803   |
| 1976 | 38          | 19      | 261        | 99          | 138        | 259         | 814   |
| 1977 | 43          | 19      | 268        | 96          | 132        | 254         | 812   |
| 1978 | 45          | 19      | 271        | 95          | 131        | 252         | 813   |
| 1979 | 47          | 20      | 286        | 94          | 134        | 249         | 830   |
| 1980 | 61          | 28      | 256        | 82          | 119        | 213         | 659   |
| 1981 | 104         | 36      | 176        | 71          | 64         | 179         | 630   |
| 1982 | 105         | 37      | 176        | 79          | 33         | 158         | 588   |
| 1983 | 105         | 37      | 169        | 76          | 31         | 151         | 569   |
| 1984 | 105         | 37      | 182        | 73          | 32         | 149         | 578   |
| 1985 | 108         | 37      | 187        | 73          | 32         | 149         | 586   |

cover a variety of topics in marine sciences *viz.*, phytoplankton, marine algae, zooplankton, nekton, benthos, corals and coral reefs - their ecology, zoogeography and systematics; primary production and experimental work on ecosystems including energy flow at different trophic levels; population dynamics and theoretical models; recycling of organic matter, influence of environmental factors on metabolic activity; marine microbiology; mariculture and experimental work of propagation of cultivable species; biology of fishes, marine reptiles, sea birds and mammals; physical chemical and biological features of the marine ecosystems; marine environmental damage caused by pollution and other man made activities; underwater surveys; conservation of living resources; methodology and techniques

in the gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay for the protection of this rare and fast vanishing marine mammal. Though the project fell through owing to official apathy, it roused such national as well as international interest that the animal was declared a protected one and it found a place in the Red Data Book of the IUCN.

Another significant contribution of the Association to the development of marine sciences in the country has been the organisation of international symposia on subjects of immediate scientific and economic interest. It has so far organised and conducted seven international symposia on I. Scombroid fishes, II. Mollusca, III. Crustacea, IV. Corals and Coral Reefs, V. Indian Ocean and

Adjacent Seas, VI. Coastal Aquaculture and VII. Endangered Marine Animals and Marine Parks.

The first symposium was held at Mandapam Camp in January 1962 on Scombroid Fishes in which 72 contributions from 14 countries were presented. The proceedings of the Symposium published in four volumes have been recognised as the most outstanding contribution to fishery science from this part of the world. The fact that this number was sold out in no time indicates the demand and usefulness of the publication to the scientific community.

The second Symposium on Crustacea was held at Cochin in January 1965. The symposium received 123 contributions from 20 countries and was attended by a large number of scientists. The Proceedings were brought out in five volumes. This has become an indispensable reference work on this interesting and economically important group of animals.

The third Symposium on Mollusca was conducted in January 1968 at Cochin. This Symposium was attended by 134 participants including 14 delegates from abroad representing seven countries. A total of 95 papers of which 59 from 15 countries other than from India were presented and the proceedings were published in three volumes.

The fourth Symposium was on Corals and Coral Reefs, held in January 1969 at Mandapam. This was the first international meet on the subject and served to attract world-wide attention to the special position corals and coral reefs occupy in the marine ecosystem. This Symposium was attended by 72 participants including 25 delegates from abroad representing nine countries. A total of 39 papers of which 27 from 12 countries were presented. The Proceedings were published in December 1972. It goes to the eternal credit of the

Association that this symposium was so unique and created such world wide interest that it was unanimously recognised by the scientific world as the First International Symposium on Corals and Coral Reefs thereby becoming the forerunner of the Second International Symposium on Corals and Coral Reefs held in Brisbane, Australia in 1973, the third held in Florida, USA in 1977 and the subsequent ones elsewhere.

The fifth Symposium on the Indian Ocean and Adjacent Seas — their origin science and resources was held at Cochin in January 1971. A Total of 255 participants including 55 from abroad attended the Symposium and 322 papers were presented which were published in volumes 14 to 18 of the Journal of the Marine Biological Association of India.

The sixth Symposium on Coastal Aquaculture was held in January 1980 at Cochin. This Symposium was attended by 354 participants including 49 delegates from abroad representing 26 countries. A total of 210 papers of which 29 from 14 countries outside India were presented in 12 sessions. The proceedings of the Symposium have been published in four parts.

During January 1985, the Association conducted the seventh Symposium on Endangered Marine Animals and Marine Parks. This symposium was attended by 162 participants including 30 delegates from abroad representing 17 countries. A total of 59 papers of which 33 papers from 19 countries were presented under 4 major subject areas viz., (1) Marine Mammals, (2) Estuarine and Marine Reptiles, (3) Marine Parks, Sanctuaries and Reserves, (4) Endangered and/or Vulnerable other marine invertebrates and vertebrates. The proceedings are now in press.

In organising the above mentioned series of seven international symposia, the proceed-

ings of which contain numerous valuable contributions on various economically important groups of marine animals and the environments in which they thrive all over the world remain classical works of reference, the Association made yet another landmark in the history of marine sciences in India.

In addition to the Journals and the proceedings of the symposia, the Association published the undermentioned three Memoirs and two Special Publications.

#### *Memoirs*

1. Ribbon Fishes of the Family Trichiuridae of India.
2. The Dinophyceae of the Indian Seas:  
Part I. Genus *Ceratium*  
Part II. Family Peridiniaceae.
3. The Goat Fishes (Family Mullidae) of the Indian Seas.

#### *Special Publications*

1. A Special Publication brought out by the Association in 1971 was the 'Bibliography of the Indian Ocean.' It is considered as a monumental work placing on record the extensive scientific effort that has gone in till then for an understanding of the Indian Ocean. The bibliography edited by eminent scientist Dr. S. Jones contains over 17,000 references.

2. Another Special Volume dedicated to the late eminent scientist Dr. N. K. Panikkar was published in 1973, which contains 36 papers written by specialists in various subjects.

In addition to the above publications, the Association has also published a few souvenirs during different Symposia.

Other than the above mentioned activities, the Association extended financial help as interest free loans to seven members during the period 1969-1984 to complete their higher studies for the Masters and Ph.D. degrees. On several occasions, the Association has also collaborated in organising Symposia and Seminars organised by other organisations.

The Association has sustained through the last 28 years mainly from membership subscription as well as from sale proceeds of its publications. Brief details of the financial position of the Association is shown in Table 2. However, in recent years, the Association received substantial financial assistance for printing the Journal as well as for conducting the Symposia from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, and the Department of Environment, Government of India. This assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

It is to the credit of the Association to note that this is one of the very few such scientific bodies to sustain for 28 years mainly on its own resources. The Association had to steer through several odds in the past, but it tided over such situations successfully. This is in a large measure due to the continued interest and cooperation of its members, especially of the scientific and technical staff of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute who had all along supported the cause of the Association and kept up the spirit of dedicated work and assistance to the Association, that too purely on a voluntary and honorary capacity. Right from the inception of the Association, the office bearers have been rendering invaluable service for its growth and development. The Association is proud to place on record its contribution at this juncture of bringing out the the Silver Jubilee volume of its Journal.

The foregoing is, but a brief account of the achievements of the Association. The future



Fig. 1. Distribution of membership of the Marine Biological Association of India.

TABLE 2. *Brief details of the financial position of the Association from 1970 through 1985*

| Year | Opening Balance |     | Receipts    |     | Total       |     | Expenses    |     | Net Balance |     |
|------|-----------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|
|      | Rs.             | Ps. | Rs.         | Ps. | Rs.         | Ps. | Rs.         | Ps. | Rs.         | Ps. |
| 1970 | 56,397.94       |     | 59,464.76   |     | 1,15,862.70 |     | 56,334.93   |     | 59,527.77   |     |
| 1971 | 59,527.77       |     | 46,573.20   |     | 1,06,100.97 |     | 62,038.35   |     | 44,062.62   |     |
| 1972 | 44,062.62       |     | 55,520.04   |     | 99,582.66   |     | 36,250.47   |     | 63,332.19   |     |
| 1973 | 63,332.19       |     | 74,367.39   |     | 1,37,699.58 |     | 88,052.14   |     | 49,647.44   |     |
| 1974 | 49,647.44       |     | 86,986.12   |     | 1,36,633.56 |     | 41,834.90   |     | 94,798.66   |     |
| 1975 | 94,798.66       |     | 1,12,892.06 |     | 2,07,690.72 |     | 65,565.01   |     | 1,42,125.71 |     |
| 1976 | 1,42,125.71     |     | 1,00,116.66 |     | 2,42,242.37 |     | 53,440.55   |     | 1,88,801.82 |     |
| 1977 | 1,88,801.82     |     | 1,00,529.40 |     | 2,89,331.22 |     | 26,295.98   |     | 2,63,035.24 |     |
| 1978 | 2,63,035.24     |     | 79,210.76   |     | 3,42,246.00 |     | 51,724.67   |     | 2,90,521.33 |     |
| 1979 | 2,90,521.33     |     | 1,00,415.64 |     | 3,90,936.97 |     | 40,443.36   |     | 3,50,493.61 |     |
| 1980 | 3,50,493.61     |     | 93,046.55   |     | 4,43,540.16 |     | 1,45,496.38 |     | 2,98,043.78 |     |
| 1981 | 2,98,043.78     |     | 1,14,808.37 |     | 4,12,852.15 |     | 67,618.65   |     | 3,45,233.50 |     |
| 1982 | 3,45,233.50     |     | 1,16,365.44 |     | 4,61,598.94 |     | 76,156.54   |     | 3,85,442.40 |     |
| 1983 | 3,85,442.40     |     | 1,01,710.09 |     | 4,87,152.49 |     | 64,449.78   |     | 4,22,702.71 |     |
| 1984 | 4,22,702.71     |     | 1,28,945.89 |     | 5,51,648.60 |     | 1,14,513.61 |     | 4,37,134.99 |     |
| 1985 | 4,37,134.99     |     | 1,12,019.38 |     | 5,49,154.37 |     | 1,49,966.47 |     | 3,99,187.90 |     |

is as ambitious as the past. Recently the Journal faced certain constraints in the regularity of publication, but presently, steps have been taken to update the Journal. It is hoped that by the end of February 1987 Vol. 25 will be issued and by the end of 1987 the Journal will be up-to-date. Efforts are now afoot to update the other publications also at the shortest possible time and launch on new schemes for the future.

It is our honest and sincere hope that the Association will reach greater heights in the years to come, with the continued enthusiasm, support and co-operation of all its members, scientists, institutions and the public. If the Association had placed the country on the map

of marine sciences in general and fishery science in particular, the credit should rightly go to its members and well-wishers for their sustained support and hard work.

The Association feels greatly honoured to dedicate this Silver Jubilee Volume of the Journal to Dr. S. Jones, its Founder President and former Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute as a tribute for the remarkable vision and fore thought with which he organised and built up this scientific body making it one of the foremost of its kind in the world and for the sustained zeal and interest he is continuing to evince in the development of marine sciences in the country.