

Editorial

One of the more pleasing outcome of the 2008 issue of Living World was the endorsement received from former Professor of Zoology and former Club member Dr. Julian Kenny. In a newspaper article in The Express of 20 November, 2008, Dr. Kenny noted the “coming of age” of Living World and further that it had “settled down into a maturity that compares with science journals in developed countries”. Such an accolade we hope will assist in the raising of more funds for the continuance, improvement and more frequent appearances of the journal.

As part of our continuing effort to improve the journal based on experiences with contributors we make changes in its format, however small. Accordingly, we have reviewed our criteria for Nature Notes. These Notes serve a dual purpose in that they offer an opportunity to record interesting or unusual observations which may be of significance, and they offer an opportunity to less experienced writers to record their observations. As such the title of the Nature Note should contain all key words and should not be longer than three journal pages including photos and tables. There is no need for an abstract or key words. References should be kept to a minimum.

It is now 35 years since we have had an article on mammals published in our journal. It is therefore, with pleasure that we welcome three articles in this issue on mammals. Ross Cooper provides a synopsis of endemic and invasive mammals in the Caribbean; Adam Brown on the status of introduced mammals on St. Martin and, the results of a small and limited trapping effort for small mammals in the Arima Valley by H. Nelson and E. Nelson. The Nelsons reported that they trapped an unidentified rodent which they believe was heretofore not recorded for Trinidad. Staff members of the Trinidad Regional Virus Laboratory trapped small mammals during arbovirus studies in various localities in Trinidad over a period of about 20 years and the only new mammal discovered was that of *Zygodontomys brevicauda soldadoensis*. It would be interesting to see if the unidentified species is in fact new to Trinidad.

Studies on reptiles are reported in three articles; two research papers and one Nature Note. Victor Quesnel continues his study on *Thecadactylus rapicauda*, this time reporting on its food and feeding behaviour. The last list of reptiles on Huevos Island off Trinidad’s north-west coast was published in 1983 - 1984, so it was of interest to update the list. Stevland Charles and S. Smith visited the island

in 2007 and five species of reptiles were recorded for the first time. The third reptile paper was a Nature Note based on the Gray Lora snake which is rare in Trinidad, but Allan Rodriguez reports on a fourth collection in the Cumaca Forest which was photographed by Hans Boos.

Studies on freshwater macroinvertebrates for the various West Indian islands have been reported serially by David Bass over the years and in this issue he reports on his work for the island of Saba. Bass records 17 species new to the island of Saba. In Trinidad, freshwater mussels have not been seen in our rivers for sometime and Ryan Mohammed in a Nature Note reports on collections of shells of two species in south-central Trinidad suggesting they might still be present in our rivers.

Matthew Cock’s series of articles on the taxonomy, identification, biology and presence in Trinidad of the Hesperidae is absent this year, but we hope the series will be back next year. However, Cock reports on the moth *Automeris metzli* which was previously misidentified as *A. janus*; the biology of *Pyrrhopyge amyclas amyclas* and *Mysoria barcastus alta*; and the life history observations in Trinidad of *Pseudosphinx tetrio* with its conspicuous caterpillar.

We welcome Victor Townsend, Daniel Proud and Michael Moore to our pages as they report on their collections of harvestmen from Trinidad. They collected 20 species including species new to Trinidad and provided a key to the families of harvestmen known from Trinidad. Daniel Proud and Victor Townsend in a Nature Note also reports on the homing ability of harvestmen, while Jo-Anne Sewlal and C. K. Starr report new records of daddy-long-legs from the Lesser Antilles.

Jo-Anne Sewlal also reports on her collection of spiders from St. Kitts which she compares with collections from nearby Nevis.

Not often one hears about bites from venomous snakes in Trinidad and Hans Boos records Mapepire bites inflicted on two individuals.

The Trinidad and Tobago Rare Birds Committee provides us with their fifth report with photos of some of the rare birds they encountered in Trinidad and Tobago in 2006 - 2007.

Two book reviews on a “Field Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago” and “The Spiders and Their Relatives of St. Vincent and the Grenadines” complete the 2008 issue of Living World.

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