

Editorial

Welcome to the New Journal *Fishes*

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Most of life's evolutionary history has been played out in the water. About 70% of the earth's surface is covered with water and, of this, 97% is salt water and less than 1% fresh water. It is currently believed that fish began to evolve about 480 million years ago. Fish constitute the oldest group of vertebrates and are the best adapted to living in almost all existent aquatic environments. Furthermore, due to their morphological and physiological plasticity, fish comprise the most diverse class of vertebrates. Indeed, there are roughly 28,000 known species, with a huge variation among them, while more are continuously being described. The key position of fish in terms of evolution justifies their study from many different points of view.

Fish are in intimate contact with the aquatic environment, and their interaction with it is also of great interest. Any understanding of fishes and their anatomy requires an understanding of this medium. Water imposes or relaxes constraints on basic physiological, morphological and ecological development. Water provides stability and predictability, supports food supplies and allows external fertilization. The fact that fish are cold-blooded animals implies that most of their metabolic processes are greatly influenced by their environmental conditions. Fish are widely used in basic research, where they provide a number of advantages, including rapid development *ex-utero*, and the possibility of large-scale genetic screening of human disease. They represent excellent scientific and biological models for studies on development, morphology, physiology, biomedical research and behaviour in other related species, as well as informative analyses of conservation and diversity.

Fish also represent an important economic source. As regards the benefits, they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins, including D and B2 (riboflavin), calcium, phosphorus and minerals, such as iron, zinc, iodine, magnesium, and potassium. Eating fish forms part of a healthy diet because they help to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke. Such are their benefits that overfishing has led to the large scale development of aquaculture, which now accounts for almost 50% of the world's fish production. However, fish farming creates a demand for new research on the main goals of interest, including fish reproduction, fish nutrition and fish pathology. For this reason, *Fishes* aims to be an essential point of reference for all of those interested in aquatic life science and aquatic animals (fishes, molluscs and crustaceans, both fresh water and marine).

Fishes is an international, multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed, scientific open-access journal, providing an advanced forum that will focus on reports of original research and critical reviews—a synthesis of research from the broad area of fish and aquatic life sciences. Our aim is to advance our knowledge of fundamental aspects of fish biology, and address the growing importance of fish in aquaculture, biomedicine and biotechnology through innovative science.

In addition to conventional contributions from the academic community, we encourage contributions from industry and other professionals. Guest editors with novel themes are welcome and, of course, we encourage comments and suggestions that might improve the quality of the journal.

We hope you enjoy *Fishes*.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.



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