



Animal, Plant and
Earth Sciences

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We live in a world of enormous complexity of organic design and diversity. The natural world is a source of both wonder, and of the most interesting questions on earth. The astonishing diversity of forms found in the plant and animal kingdoms, is mirrored in the diversity of the academic reviews here in this section. From plants, animals, and their environment; these areas are examined here at a genetic, behavioural and ecosystem level. Spanning the breadth of the natural world, the pieces in this section together show how these levels are integrated to produce the remarkable panopoly of life on earth.

Our best in section piece by Andrew Mooney submerges us in the world of whales, dolphins, and other cetaceans, giving an exposition on one of the many ways human activity is affecting and shaping the natural world.

The extinction of native species poses a unique threat to the Irish ecosystem, leading to the loss of biodiversity, adverse reshaping of ecosystems and disruption of food webs. The reintroduction of extinct species is emerging as an important concept in Irish ecology and conservation. An examination of candidate species for reintroduction, and the benefits, pitfalls and challenges this poses are explored in this section.

Cannibalism in the animal kingdom has long been the fascination of Zoologists and the wider public alike. How these behaviours evolved and are maintained, and the advantages and disadvantages of conspecific consumption, are here insightfully surveyed. Finally the fascinating topic of plant fasciation is explored, detailing and analysing the molecular and pathogenic causes of this deformity.

The second edition of the TSSR marks the inauguration of the Animal, Plant and Earth Sciences section. Dedicated to the natural world, the study of whole organisms, their interactions, and the planet that they live on; the section provides a platform for the community of question-askers for whom the natural world is a source of the most interesting questions on earth. Overall, the quality of reviews both summited and published, reflect the high standard of natural students in Trinity, and I thank them for the time and effort invested in the writing of the pieces.

It remains for me to thank the wonderful team who edited and reviewed the pieces, including Darren O'Connell, Deirdre McClean, Dermot McMorrough, Aoibheann Williams, Bennet Thomson, and Maureen Williams. I'd like to also extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Andrew Jackson, the academic supervisor of this section, for the generosity of his advice and time throughout the process, and for his constant support of the TSSR.

Finally, it has been a sincere privilege to serve as editor of this section, I hope you will read these wonderful pieces with pleasure.

Sarah Deegan
Animal, Plant and Earth Sciences Editor
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