



Editor's Desk

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The most important task of the editorial board of this unique journal is to identify multidisciplinary themes and experienced researchers who can guest-edit them. Fortunately for us, this has not been a hard task. We have covered 60 themes since 2007. In the current climate of investigations, inter, intra, and trans disciplinary topics abound at the interfaces of interconnected or even seemingly unconnected disciplines.

Consider the theme of this issue: *molecular ecology and wildlife conservation*. The term *molecular ecology* may raise eyebrows because molecules and ecology represent the opposite ends of the spectrum of the levels of biological organization. But as you will learn from the lead article by Anusha Krishnan, to understand evolutionary relationships between organisms, one could use data from both DNA sequences as well as field observations. And how is molecular ecology connected to wildlife conservation? You will also find elaborate answers to this question in this issue guest-edited by Uma Ramakrishnan.

Thus, each issue of this journal reveals a new theme and elucidates its multiple facets. To help orient the readers towards the theme, we have recently also started *podcast* series. Through an initiative from the Office of Communications at IISc, we now have a podcast with the guest editor of each issue. We hope the readers find this useful.

The readership of this journal is vast and diverse. It is not only meant for readers in the bespoke field but also for those who are wont to leisurely reading and would like an in-depth understanding of a topic even if does not directly concern their area of study. Additionally, every issue is prepared to serve as a representative snapshot of the theme at the time of its publication. Therefore, the editorial board chooses the guest editors and the themes carefully. It also tries to achieve balance among multiple disciplines of basic sciences, engineering, and mathematics. In addition to 60 themes from 2007 to 2021, eight more themes for 2022 and 2023 have already been chosen. When I classified these 68 themes, I find the following distribution:

Biology: 10 | Chemistry: 13 | Mathematics: 4 | Physics: 7
Environment and climate science: 7
Computer science, electrical and electronics engineering: 6
Mechanical and materials engineering: 10
Interdisciplinary fields: 11

It is well balanced in terms of topics with one or two wanting more attention. The editorial board will take cognizance of it when it chooses topics for issues that will be published in 2024 and later.

Advanced planning of themes has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that there is enough time to contact the experts, and experts too have sufficient time to prepare their review articles. It also gives the publisher enough time to ensure that each issue comes out on time. But setting a target in the distant future (in the time scale of active researchers) may reduce the sense of urgency and therefore priority at the moment. As months go by, newer commitments may come in the way for the guest editors and the authors. In fact, we have had to change the order of the themes twice in the past. But there has not been any other major problem so far, which is why we confidently list the future themes in the back pages of every issue. The credit for this confidence goes to guest editors, authors, and reviewers. The Journal is indebted to them.

The completion of each issue is not an insignificant accomplishment for the editorial office in IISc and the Springer team with all the uncertainties and delays on many fronts. Yet, we try to publish the online version of the issue on the first day of the quarter. While we have not always succeeded in this endeavor, we hope to achieve this goal in the next two years because we have decided the themes and guest editors well in advance.

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