

Revving Up for the Year of Science

Source: BioScience, 59(1) : 3

Published By: American Institute of Biological Sciences

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2009.59.1.1>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

PUBLISHER

Richard T. O'Grady

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Timothy M. Beardsley

SENIOR EDITOR

Donna Daniels Verdier

PRODUCTION MANAGER / ART DIRECTOR

Herman Marshall

PEER REVIEW / EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Jennifer A. Williams

MANUSCRIPT EDITOR

Laura C. Sullivan

Editors: Eye on Education: Cathy Lundmark (educationoffice@aibs.org); Feature articles: Cathy Lundmark (features@aibs.org); Washington Watch: Robert E. Gropp (publicpolicy@aibs.org).

Editorial Board: Agriculture: Sonny Ramaswamy; Animal Behavior: Janice Moore; Animal Development: Paula Mabee; Botany: Kathleen Donohue; Cell Biology: Randy Wayne; Ecology: Scott Collins, Daniel Simberloff; Ecotoxicology: Judith S. Weis; Education: Gordon E. Uno; Environmental Policy: Gordon Brown, J. Michael Scott; Evolutionary Biology: James Mallet; Genetics and Evolution: Martin Tracey; History and Philosophy: Richard M. Burian; Invertebrate Biology: Kirk Fitzhugh; Landscape Ecology: Monica Turner; Microbiology: Edna S. Kaneshiro; Molecular Biology: David Hillis; Molecular Evolution and Genomics: David Rand; Neurobiology: Cole Gilbert; Plant Development: Cynthia S. Jones; Policy Forum: Eric A. Fischer; Population Biology: Ben Pierce; Professional Biologist: Jean Wyld; Sensing and Computation: Geoffrey M. Henebry; Statistics: Kent E. Holsinger; Vertebrate Biology: Harvey B. Lillywhite.

BioScience (ISSN 0006-3568; e-ISSN 1525-3244) is published 11 times a year (July/August combined) by the American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1444 I Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005, in collaboration with the University of California Press. Periodicals postage paid at Berkeley, CA, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *BioScience*, University of California Press, Journals and Digital Publishing, 2000 Center Street, Suite 303, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223.

Membership and subscription: Individual members, go to www.aibs.org/individual-membership for benefits and services, membership rates, and back issue claims. Subscription renewal month is shown in the four-digit year-month code in the upper right corner of the mailing label. Institutional subscribers, go to www.ucpressjournals.com or e-mail customer service@ucpressjournals.com.

Advertising: For information on both display and online advertisements and deadlines, contact Colin Mackenzie, University of California Press; e-mail: colin.mackenzie@ucpress.edu or adsales@ucpressjournals.com. For information on classified placements and deadlines, contact Jennifer Williams, AIBS; e-mail: jwilliams@aibs.org.

Copying and permissions notice: Authorization to copy article content beyond fair use (as specified in sections 107 and 108 of the US Copyright Law) for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by the Regents of the University of California on behalf of the AIBS for libraries and other users, provided that they are registered with and pay the specified fee through the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), www.copyright.com. To reach the CCC's Customer Service Department, dial 978-750-8400 or write to 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923. Permission, as well as paper reprints, may also be obtained for current content through the Rightslink service on Caliber at <http://caliber.ucpress.net>. For information about Rightslink and for other permissions and licensing inquiries, please go to the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions Web site: www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp.

Abstracting and indexing: For complete abstracting and indexing information, please visit www.ucpressjournals.com.

© 2009 American Institute of Biological Sciences. All rights reserved. Printed at Allen Press, Inc.

BioScience

Organisms from Molecules to the Environment
American Institute of Biological Sciences

Revvng Up for the Year of Science

The year 2009 has been designated the Year of Science (www.yearofscience2009.org). The Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS) and AIBS, together with the Geological Society of America, the National Science Teachers Association, and the University of California Museum of Paleontology (home of the new Understanding Science Web site; see p. 91)—are fully engaged in the effort to attain the goal of the Year of Science: to empower Americans “to appreciate the pragmatic outcomes of science, to distinguish science from non-science, and to participate in social discourse that provides insight into the nature of science” (COPUS, www.copusproject.org/rationale.php).

The celebration is timed to coincide with many seminal scientific anniversaries, most notably the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, who by introducing the concepts of natural selection and evolution by common descent laid the foundation for essentially all of modern biology. Year of Science activities will span the full range of science and technology and involve a remarkable collaboration of 450 professional scientific societies, universities, science teachers' associations, government laboratories, community groups, museums, and businesses.

Let me point out, however, that 2009 is cause for celebration for other reasons. It is, for example, the 800th anniversary of the founding of Cambridge University, the 250th anniversary of the birth of Scottish poet Robert Burns, and the 50th anniversaries of Hawaiian statehood and the Chevy El Camino. I mention these dates not to encourage a 12-month frenzy of parties, but rather to point out that public *understanding* of science begins with public *awareness* of science, and 2009 is not atypical in providing a great deal of competition for the attention of the American public. For many people, the anniversary of the Chevy El Camino will seem more relevant than any of the year's scientific anniversaries.

It is the burden of the scientific community to attract notice above the din. Scientific information has never been more readily accessible: Web sites, podcasts, blogs, cable shows, and YouTube videos complement the more traditional sources of information, such as radio, magazines, and books. Unfortunately, scientific information competes, on a dismayingly level playing field, not only with more approachable nonscience enterprises but also with misinformation and pseudoscience, which are not always immediately recognizable as such.

So here is our challenge: a single Year of Science will not transform the American public, but if the effort in 2009 boosts public awareness of science, it can be a launching point for a long-term initiative to alert, inform, and educate the public about the value of scientific understanding in everyone's life. Thus, the year 2010—incidentally, the 125th anniversary of the invention of the Daimler-Maybach automobile internal combustion engine—and the years that follow should all be years for the public understanding of science, as well as for science's understanding of its public role. AIBS and COPUS will continue to be a part of the efforts to keep the conversation going.

MAY R. BERENBAUM
President, AIBS

doi:10.1525/bio.2009.59.1.1