

AQUATIC MICROBIAL ECOLOGY (AME): An editorial

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The study of microbial organisms is an essential part of ecology. Early investigations of predator-prey interactions or formulations of exponential population growth were based on aquatic 'microbes'. However, the importance of the roles played by microbes in aquatic systems, and the complexities of microbial communities, were not well recognised until the mid-1970s. Since then though, microbes have occupied center stage in a variety of fields, ranging from molecular biology to community ecology. In marine ecology, trophic interactions in microbial communities became a 'hot topic' in the early 1980s. By the mid-1980s a critical mass of researchers was engaged — a mass sufficient to justify and support a specialised international journal: *Marine Microbial Food Webs*.

This journal was published by the Institut Océanographique (comprised of the Musée Océanographique in Monaco and the Institut Océanographique in Paris). Volume 1 Number 1 appeared in October 1985, the last volume (Volume 8) in July of 1994. A wide variety of traditional research articles and carefully chosen symposia-associated papers were published. *Marine Microbial Food Webs* presented papers from the 4th workshop of the 'Group for Aquatic

Primary Productivity', the NATO Advanced Study Institute, Protozoa and Their Role in Marine Processes, and the Plankton Ecology Group workshop, Protozooplankton Ecology — Methods and Seasonal Successions.

Despite scientific success, the journal represented an expense to the Institut Océanographique and in mid-1994 we were abruptly informed of their unwillingness to continue publication. When the search began for a new publisher and a new start, of all potential publishers, Inter-Research appeared a natural fit. Inter-Research was well acquainted with quite a few of the editorial board members of *Marine Microbial Food Webs* from their activities in support of *Marine Ecology Progress Series* (MEPS).

MEPS had been presenting more and more papers concerned with microbial ecology. The possibility of using *Marine Microbial Food Webs* as a base to launch a new journal, a sister to MEPS encompassing all of aquatic microbial ecology, was irresistible to all concerned. *Aquatic Microbial Ecology* (AME) is much more than the continuation of *Marine Microbial Food Webs*: it is the successor, and we have every faith in its success!