

PREFACE

This is the third volume in a series on crayfish started in 1997. It is a follow up on previous issues (n°347 : « Crayfish » Special, genus *Austropotamobius*, and n°356 : « Crayfish » Special, European native species), focusing on the relationships between native crayfish and other species (foreign crayfish, fish, molluscs, pathogenic agents, etc.)

It has become obvious that the problems of ecosystem management and conservation of the three heritage crayfish species (*Austropotamobius pallipes*, *Astacus astacus*, and *Austropotamobius torrentium*) are now a global European issue. The European scientific community is slowly being organised and research programmes are implemented thanks to interdisciplinary cooperation. In our publications, we shall continue discussing such topics as population dynamics, genetics, habitat studies, environmental deterioration analyses, interrelationships between native and exotic species, stock management, and habitat reclamation.

A fourth volume is being prepared for 2002. It will be thicker and deal with issues of conservation biology and crayfish population management in the wild, following the European symposium held in September 2001 in Poitiers. It will contain the papers read during the symposium, as well as recommendations and preconisations made by way of consequence. The success of this first symposium - dealing exclusively with European astacology - and the papers already published in the first three issues are an illustration of the energy driving the scientists and stress the need for supporting multidisciplinary programmes on a global European scale.

Supplementing the efforts of the International Association of Astacology (IAA), we hope that this BFPP series organised around one topic will be both a forum for scientists and a tool for administrators.

Indeed, narrowing the gap between scientists and administrators is a prerequisite for implementing practical actions in the wild in coordination with public authorities, and for federating programmes drawing on European rules and regulations.

We hope that this issue, together with Volume IV still to come, will prove to be an effective contribution towards these objectives, and we wish to thank all European astacologists for their active work and their enthusiasm.

In addition, the BFPP editorial staff wishes to mention administrative difficulties that disrupted the circulation of our latest issues, in 2000 and 2001 and to proffer our apologies to our authors and readers who might have been affected during these few months of disruption. And yet this journal has never been healthier, with numerous projects in the books together with a full and diversified publication schedule for next year. We will very shortly make a special effort towards improving circulation and reader's information, with the help of new electronic editing and distribution tools. Comprehensive information will shortly be sent out to our readers.

Erick VIGNEUX and Catherine SOUTY-GROSSET