

American Society of Naturalists

To advance understanding of evolution, ecology, behavior, and other broad biological disciplines toward the conceptual unification of the biological sciences.

What Is a Naturalist?

A naturalist can draw on a deep and broad familiarity with one or more groups of organisms or ecological communities in order to inspire ideas, evaluate hypotheses, and intelligently design research with an awareness of organisms' special peculiarities. Even more, perhaps, a naturalist is inexhaustibly fascinated by biological diversity and does not view organisms merely as models or vehicles for theory but rather as the raison d'être for biological investigation.

—Based on Douglas Futuyma, “Wherefore and Whither the Naturalist?” *American Naturalist* (1998) 151:2

The American Naturalist

In 1867, four men—Union veterans of the American Civil War and former students of Louis Agassiz at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology—created a journal that would unite the serious scientific study of organisms in their environments with the development of theory, especially Charles Darwin's ideas about evolution. They wanted to foster a forum where experts could share insights across many fields. The first issue of *The American Naturalist* was published in March 1867.



The American Society of Naturalists

In 1883, two of the editors of *The American Naturalist* joined with others to form the American Society of Naturalists, a society devoted to cultivating conversation across disciplines. Later, as science became more specialized and professionalized and as more narrowly focused societies broke off from the ASN, members of the ASN reaffirmed the importance of a society whose mission was to promote unification through integration across disciplines. In 1908, both the ASN and *The American Naturalist* recognized evolution as the theory most able to promote the conceptual unification of the biological sciences and embraced its study as central to the mission of the society and the journal.

In 1950, the ASN assumed full editorial control of *The American Naturalist*.

A Society with an International Scope

A third of the membership of the ASN lives outside the United States, and more than half of the submissions to *The American Naturalist* come from authors in 45 other countries. Institutions in 42 countries around the globe subscribe to the journal, and more than 5,000 libraries in more than 100 developing nations receive access to *The American Naturalist* at no cost or at a deep discount.

Promoting the Conversation in the ASN

- **Stand-alone meetings** integrating ecology, evolution, and behavioral biology.
- **Graduate student workshops** focused especially on methods integrating data and theory.
- **Graduate student travel awards** supporting travel to annual meetings.
- **Student research grants** supporting research incorporating the conceptual integration for which the ASN stands.
- **Vice-Presidential symposia** publishing themed issues across ecology, evolution, and behavioral biology.
- **ASN symposia** presenting synthetic issues in evolution, ecology, and behavior at the annual meetings.
- **Graduate Student Council** coordinating opportunities for student members at www.asngrads.com

ASN Awards Honor Those Who Advance the Goals of the Society

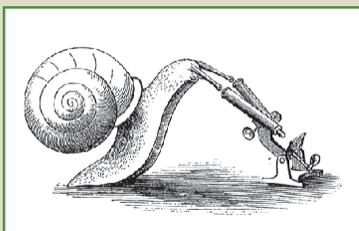
- **Honorary Lifetime Membership**, honoring scientists whose research careers epitomize the goals of the society.
- **ASN Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Conceptual Unification of the Biological Sciences**, honoring a senior but still active investigator making fundamental contributions to the society's goals.
- **ASN Distinguished Naturalist Award**, honoring an active investigator in mid-career who has made significant contributions to the knowledge of a particular ecosystem or group of organisms.
- **ASN Early Career Investigator Award**, recognizing outstanding and promising work by investigators who received their doctorate degrees within the three years preceding the application deadline.
- **ASN President's Award**, honoring an outstanding article published in *The American Naturalist* in the previous year.
- **The American Naturalist Student Paper Award**, honoring student work published in *The American Naturalist* that best represents the goals of the ASN.
- **ASN Outstanding Student Poster Award**, **ASN Outstanding Postdoctoral Presentation Award**, and **ASN Outstanding Student Presentation Award**, each recognizing standout work by ASN members at Society meetings.

Promoting the Conversation in *The American Naturalist*

The journal welcomes the submission of manuscripts that develop new conceptual syntheses, pose new and significant problems, introduce novel subjects to the readership, or change the way people think about topics of interest to a broad readership. In addition to articles and notes, *The American Naturalist* publishes:

- **Syntheses**, which analyze and synthesize recent findings in the biological sciences and present new perspectives on those results.
- **Historical Perspectives**, which examine the role of earlier articles that have influenced the development and integration of the natural sciences.
- **Natural History Miscellany Notes**, which enlighten our understanding of the natural history of a species and of biological diversity.

The journal offers affordable publishing options for every budget, including the ASN **Grant-in-Need** which enables members who need it to publish with no page charges; **e-articles** and **online-only color** for free color figures; free support for **Green Open Access** for any article; and options for publishing CC-BY or Gold Open Access where required.



The Logo of the American Society of Naturalists

The snail looking into a microscope appeared at the end of the introductory essay featured in the very first issue of *The American Naturalist*, in March 1867. It was drawn by E. S. Morse, one of the journal's founders; Morse's "Land Snails of New England" was the first article to be published in the journal. The image of the grasshopper playing a violin (seen on the reverse), also drawn by Morse, appeared in "The Songs of the Grasshopper" in the May 1868 issue.