



## Editorial

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### ***Panta rei (Eraclitus, 550 – 480 B.C.)***

As pointed out by Eraclitus, everything is changing. Ecology, as an historical discipline, has explicitly incorporated this concept, merging energetics and evolution in the ecological stage represented by the ‘*environmental niche*’. Where land, freshwater and sea meet, these environmental changes became so evident as to be representative of a transitional landscape, which integrates, on the one hand, natural processes ranging from the scale of microbial loop dynamics to that of climate changes, on the other, the history of human societies. These two components are so strictly interwoven as to determine a single ecological adaptive management unit.

Recently, for applied purposes, these landscapes were collectively defined by the European Community as transitional water ecosystems (EC 60/2000, Water Framework Directive, WFD), overcoming a long lasting effort by the scientific community to find a simple classification scheme. The term transitional includes a number of ecosystem types, from river mouths, to coastal lagoons and brackish ponds and wetlands, and emphasizes their common and emerging characteristic, i.e., the high variability along spatial and temporal scales. Despite the conceptual objections that can arise from this definition, the term has the merit of reducing the existing fragmentation of both conceptual approaches and experimental efforts to the study of ecology, conservation and management of these peculiar bodies of water. Fragmentation has often led the international literature to an underestimation of the studies carried out on transitional waters because they were of local and descriptive character and often biased by their focus on a single or a few components of the ecosystems. As a result, the scientific interdisciplinary community has lost substantial information on these ecosystems, which, being one of the most appropriate ecological stages to develop and test ecological theory, lend themselves to represent model ecosystems, as well as monitoring grounds to test environmental health at local and regional scales, and early signals of global changes.

Transitional Water Bulletin is open to the scientific community to present knowledge acquired on transitional waters of all eco-regions and, hopefully, to clarify concepts and terminology and to stimulate new paradigms to address the ever increasing challenge presented by the conservation of both ecological health and quality of life in the coastal transitional landscapes. TWB is intended to be a forum where ideas, approaches, original studies or integrative analyses on the ecology, conservation and management issues can be presented and discussed in the framework of the historical integration of natural and cultural heritages. TWB is an online journal. In principle, we conceive the journal as a sort of peer-reviewed, compelling and long newsletter, apt to rapidly distribute what is considered by scientists to be new, original and innovative and should be transmitted to the community of stake holders and end users. To this aim, Transitional Water Bulletin welcomes contributions, not only from scientists and researchers in the traditional fields of academic ecology, but also from scientists and researches belonging to archaeological, historical and social fields.

Publishing a new journal is the final results of an intense networking of ideas and persons and of a lot of work by other people who make ideas available to a wider audience. We wish to acknowledge all colleagues who collaborated to the project , particularly those who shared with us the idea of launching a new journal and participate to the Editorial Board. The publication of the journal is made possible by the skill and dedication of the staff of SIBA at University of Lecce, our publisher. Last but not least, we wish to thank the first contributors, who felt it worth to invest their intellectual properties in this project and have actually brought the journal on press.