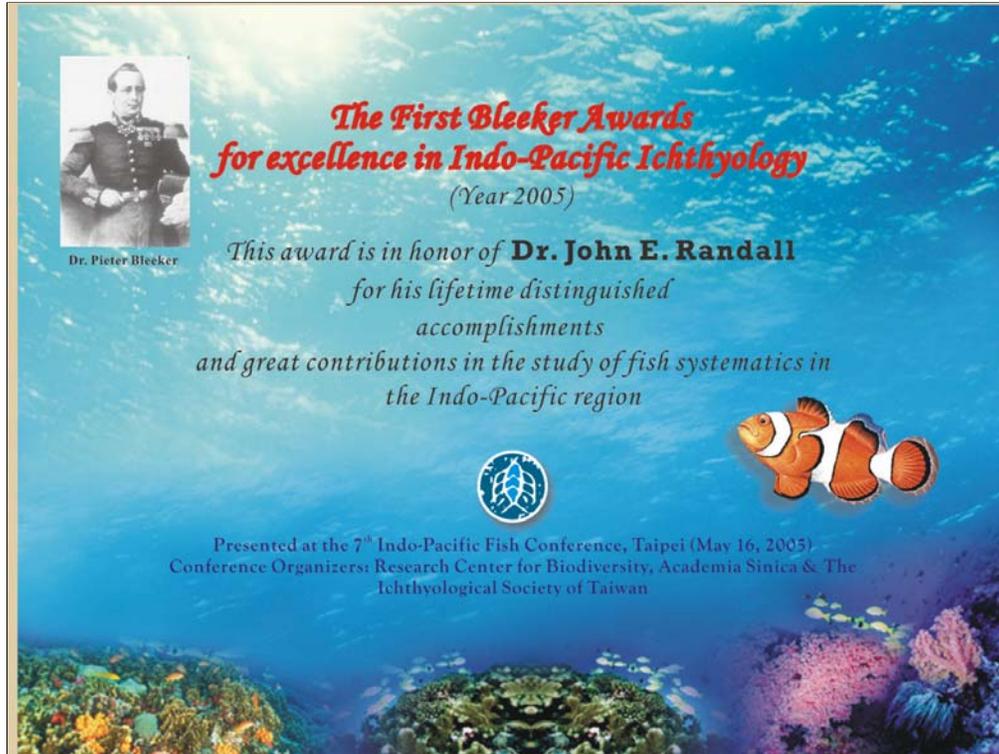




I have the honor of introducing the first recipient of the First Bleeker Award in Indo-Pacific Ichthyology.



For his lifetime distinguished accomplishments and outstanding contributions in the study of fish systematics in the Indo-Pacific region:

This award goes to none other than Dr John E. Randall.



I've known Jack for about 30 years and the only true lament I ever heard him say was:

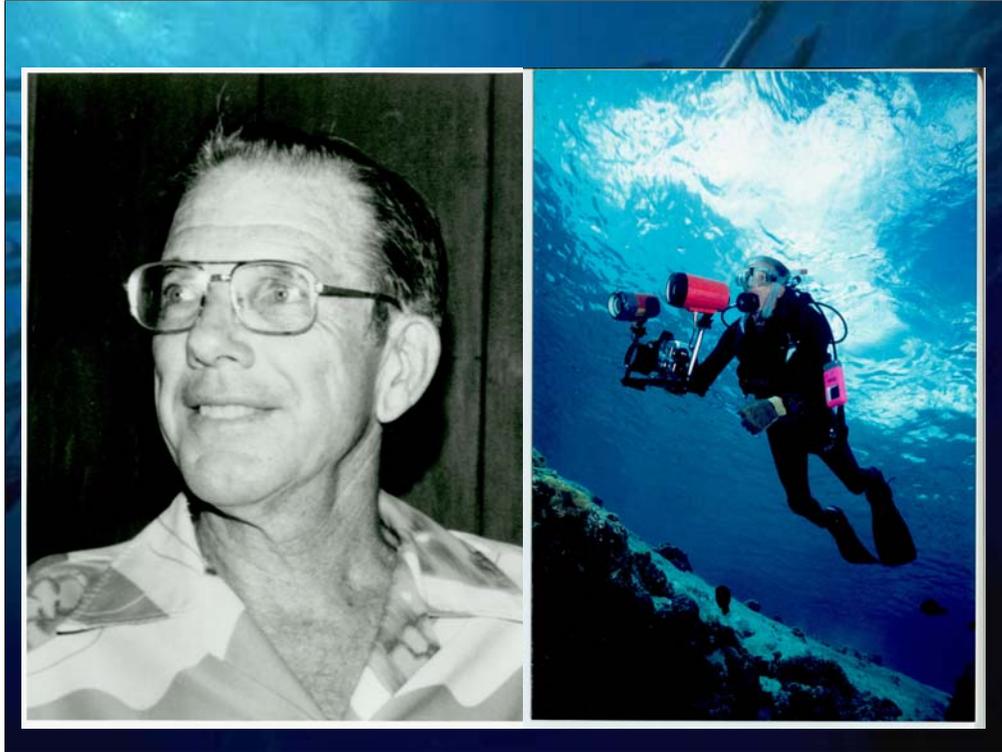
“My only regret in life is that I was born after Pieter Bleeker”

The idea, of course, if Jack had arrived in Indonesia at a time in history prior to Bleeker, that Jack would be at the top of the list in terms of numbers of fish species described, instead of Bleeker.

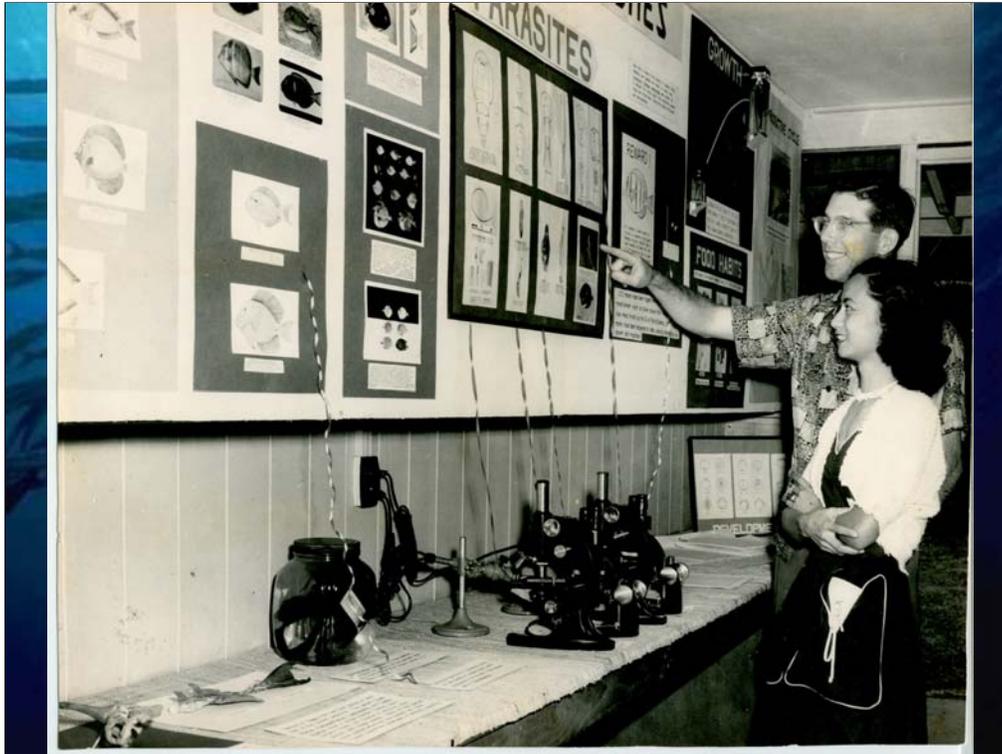
Then this would be the first John Randall award that we would be giving out to who knows whom.

But History has it otherwise, in fact:

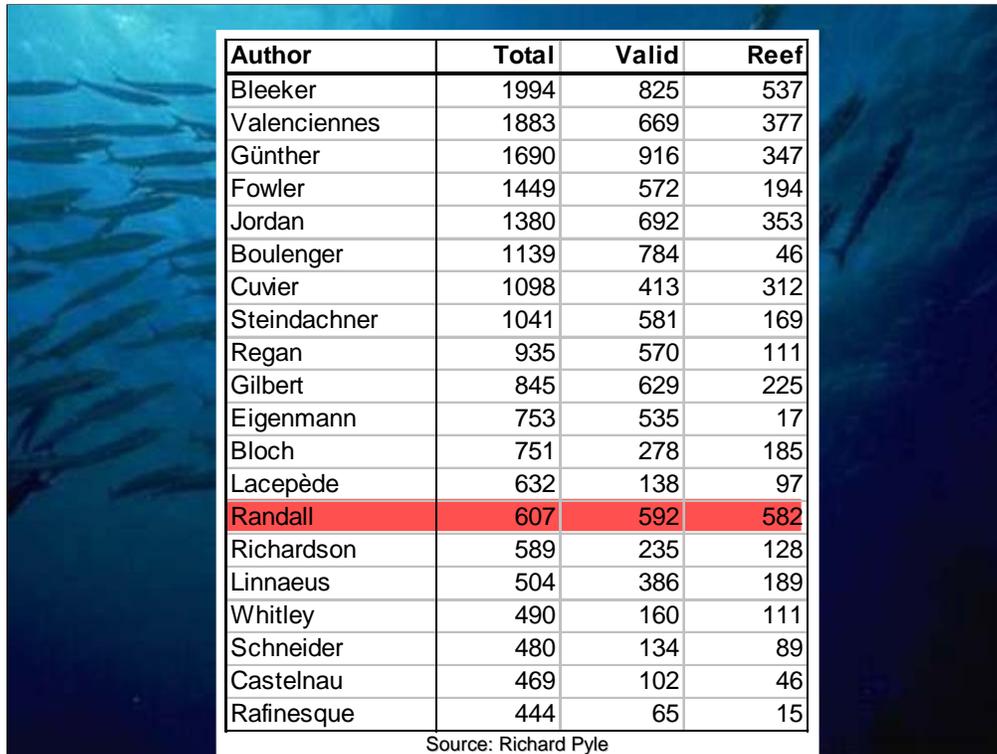
In our time, there is no more appropriate recipient of the Bleeker Award in Systematics than Jack Randall. Bleeker himself was a man of undaunted energy and remarkable intellect. He channeled these qualities into ichthyology primarily in Indonesia, in a region where more fish species exist than any place else on earth, at a time when only a fraction of the species were known to science. The giants of systematic ichthyology built their reputations at a time when a small percentage of total fish species were described. Bleeker ended up describing 1,994 species, more than any other ichthyologist.



Jack's accomplishments are no less impressive. Similar to Bleeker in terms of boundless energy and keen intellect, Jack adds an indomitable spirit of underwater adventure. Unlike in Bleeker's time, Jack mostly has to hunt for increasingly more rare new species, spending long hours underwater. This has required fearless and intelligent use of SCUBA, the ability to recognize all known species, and skill in capturing the elusive valuable specimen. In these, Jack has no equal.



Above water, he applies the other traits that earn the reputation of a productive scientist: attention to detail and accuracy, sleuth in search of truth, and dedication to publication.



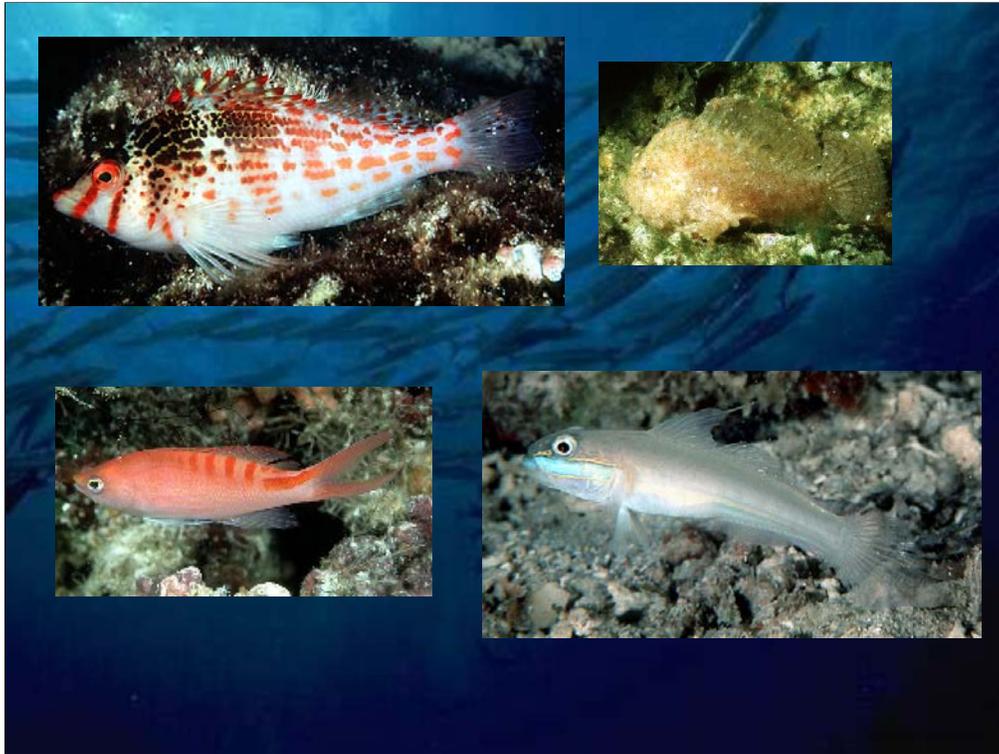
Author	Total	Valid	Reef
Bleeker	1994	825	537
Valenciennes	1883	669	377
Günther	1690	916	347
Fowler	1449	572	194
Jordan	1380	692	353
Boulenger	1139	784	46
Cuvier	1098	413	312
Steindachner	1041	581	169
Regan	935	570	111
Gilbert	845	629	225
Eigenmann	753	535	17
Bloch	751	278	185
Lacepède	632	138	97
Randall	607	592	582
Richardson	589	235	128
Linnaeus	504	386	189
Whitley	490	160	111
Schneider	480	134	89
Castelnau	469	102	46
Rafinesque	444	65	15

Source: Richard Pyle

In terms of productivity, superlatives are insufficient; the numbers speak for themselves. Jack has described (to date) a total of 607 species. This places him as number 15 on the all time list of authors of fish species. However, all those above him on this list had the distinct advantage of working at a time when there were still many species unknown to science. Jack sits at the top of the list in terms of ferreting out remaining undescribed species and in one other notable category: coral reef species. He described 582 coral reef fishes with only Bleeker coming close to this with 537.



To be fair, Jack had one other big advantage aside from SCUBA that Bleeker lacked: photography. Jack invented an excellent method of taking photos of newly collected dead specimens.



This, together with superb underwater photographic ability has helped him communicate new discoveries and the diversity of coral reef fishes.

For a more complete account of the many more accomplishments of Jack Randall I encourage you to read the brief account in the IPFC 7 program.

I would like to close this introduction with a small excerpt from a poem about Jack Randall that was authored by John Earle

Jack's modesty cannot be silenced
He builds upon the works of giants.
Karl Linné of Systema fame
Gave fish (and himself) a Latin name.
French poissonists flocked to science's aid,
Cuvier, Quoy, Gaimard, Lacépède.
Deutch fischwissenschaft marched as well
Mit Bloch, Schneider, Günther, und Rüppell.
With what they had some went quite far,
Like David Jordan, super-Starr.



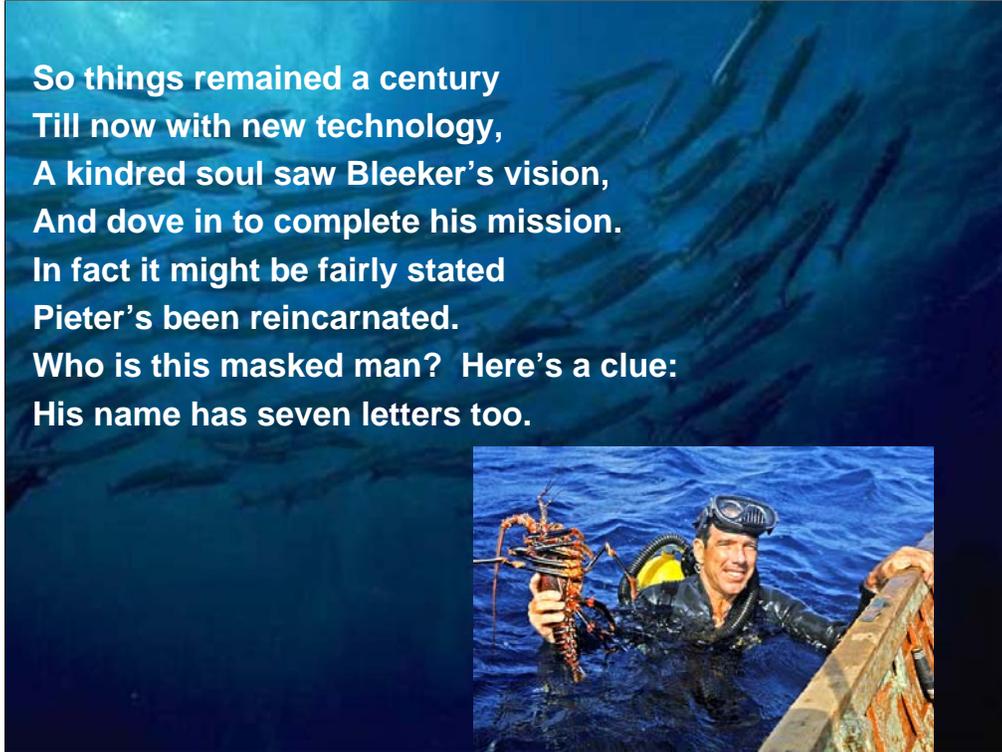
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**But greatest was Pieter Bleeker
Who must have got help from der Maker.
Our wise Dutch doctor's justly famed.
Five hundred coral reef fish named
From fishes bought from fishermen,
Studied and drawn, descriptions penned.
From Java to the Celebes
He missed few species in the seas
With dry-boot ichthyology.**

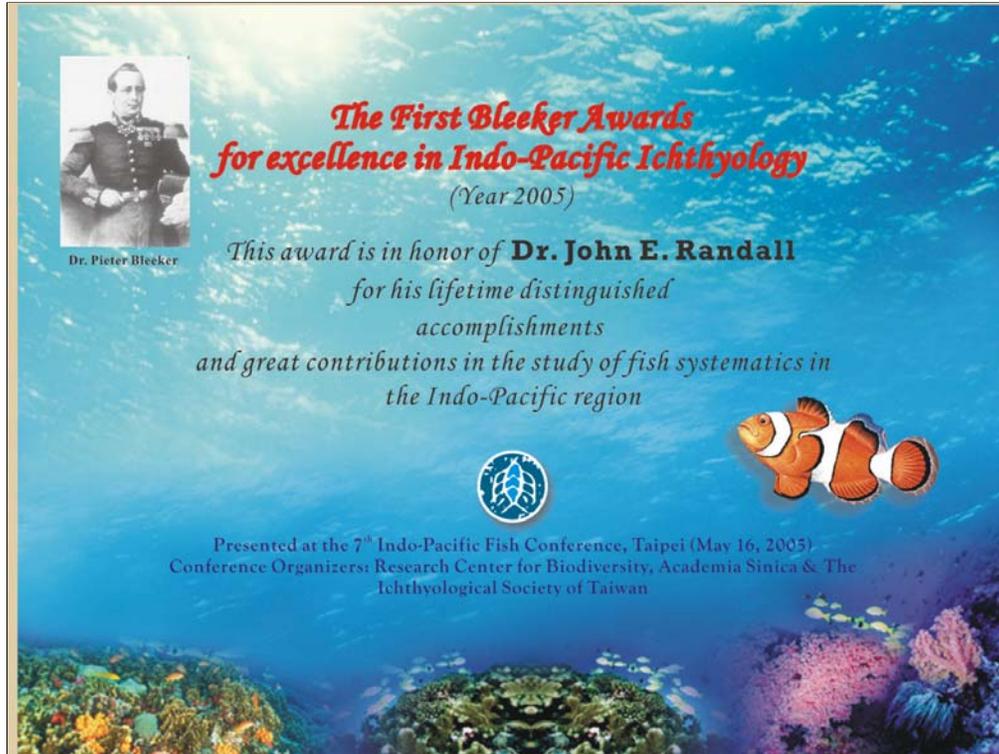


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So things remained a century
Till now with new technology,
A kindred soul saw Bleeker's vision,
And dove in to complete his mission.
In fact it might be fairly stated
Pieter's been reincarnated.
Who is this masked man? Here's a clue:
His name has seven letters too.



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It is altogether fitting and appropriate that the first Bleeker award for fish systematics go to Jack Randall.