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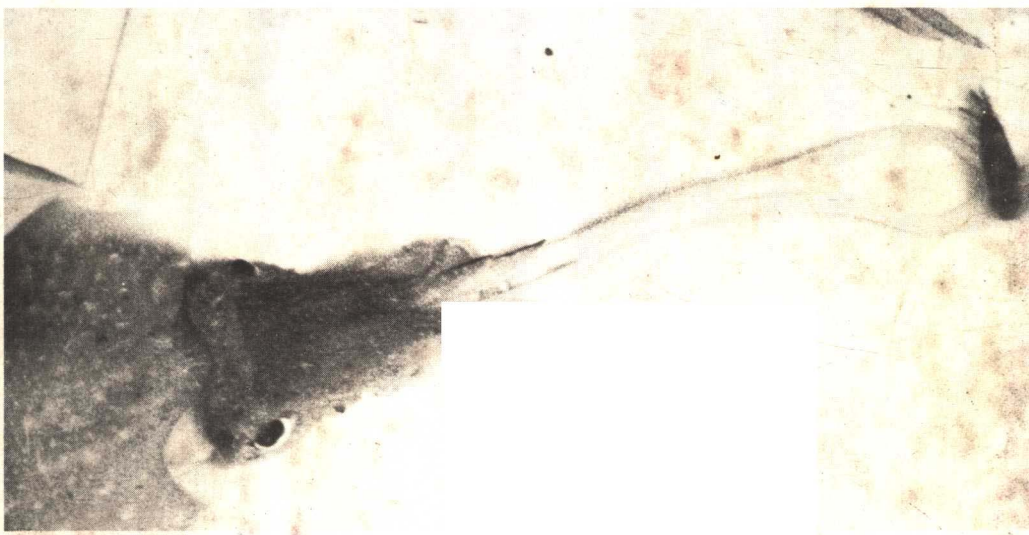
The Biology of Cephalopods

Edited by Marion Nixon and J. B. Messenger



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The Biology of Cephalopods

(The Proceedings of a Symposium held at The Zoological Society of London on 10 and 11 April 1975)

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

JOHN MESSENGER and MARION NIXON*

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Although this Symposium was originally conceived simply as a tribute to Professor J. Z. Young, it soon became apparent that there had never been, so far as we could ascertain, a full-scale meeting devoted exclusively to cephalopods. In a world burgeoning with symposia, large and small, national and international, on a broad canvas or devoted to the latest, and often ephemeral, problems of a particular research field, this seemed to us a quite extraordinary oversight. For not only are the cephalopods fascinating in their own right, but for the last 40 years they have provided material for fundamental research in neurobiology. We therefore set out to produce a meeting that would both honour Professor Young and reflect current research into different aspects of the life of cephalopods.

The result will inevitably be seen to be a compromise and our title over-ambitious. Although there is as strong a neurobiological bias as would be expected (Professor Young having worked on the nervous system throughout his long and active career) this volume could not provide a comprehensive review of the many experiments on learning in *Octopus* and *Sepia* carried out by him and his colleagues: readers seeking this will consult the useful review by Sanders (1975). And we do not pretend that this volume is a definitive Biology of Cephalopods: it is a record of a conference into which we fitted as many speakers as possible. Naturally we had to make some selection, partly because the Zoological Society's Symposia are traditionally limited to two days and partly because, in these times of financial stringency, it was impossible to invite every worker in the field. As it was, several contributors had to finance themselves, despite the very generous financial help given by the Royal Society, by the Wellcome Trustees, and above all by the Zoological Society of London. To all of these bodies we would like to express our warmest thanks for making the Symposium possible. We would like, too, to thank the Zoological Society of

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