



BioS Reports

Glimpse into the activities of the
Master's course "Biology in Society"

ISSUE 50

July 2026

ISSN 2940 - 4673

BIOS REPORTS WITH NUMBERS - Damla Cicek Karadag

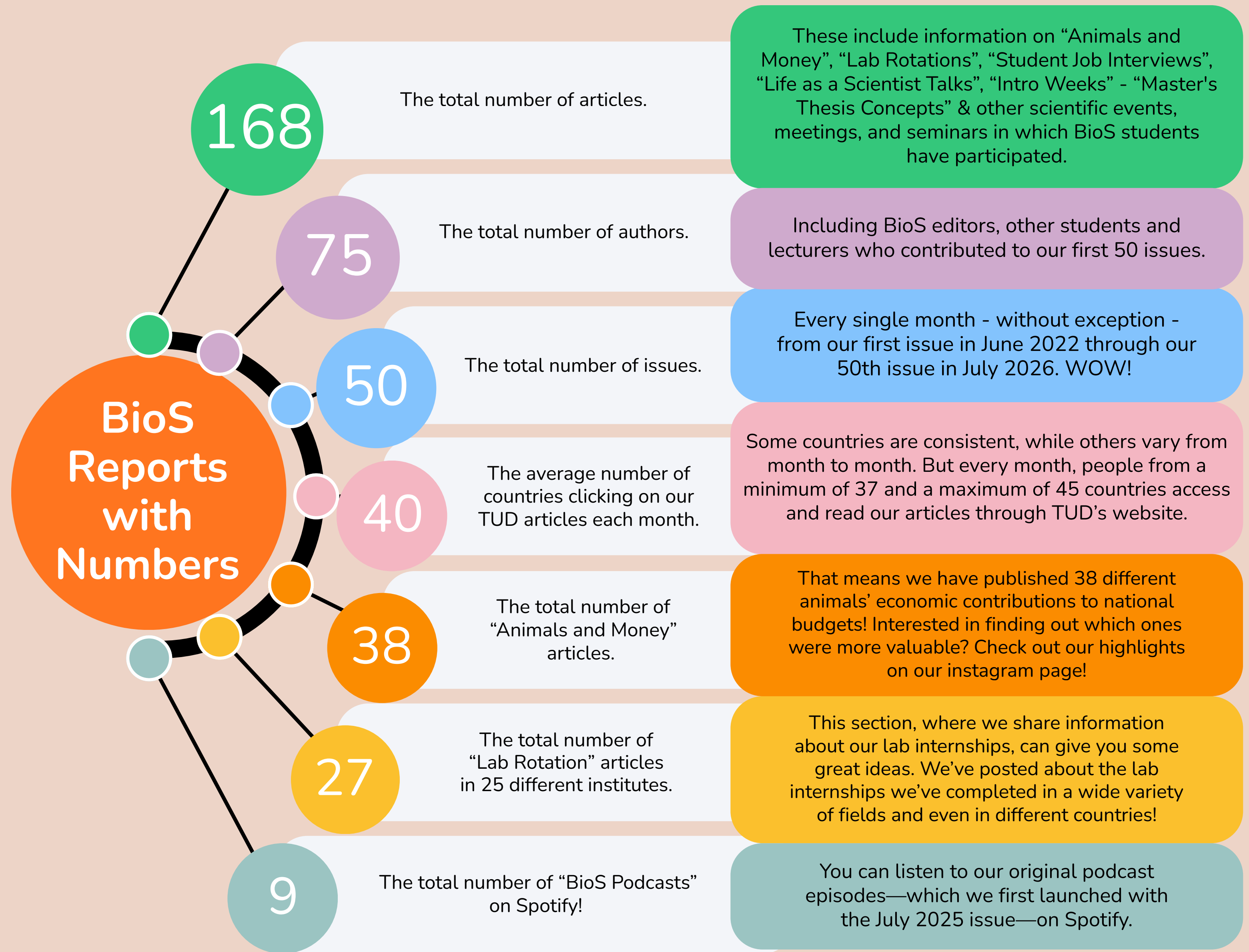
Welcome to a special milestone in our journey!

Four years, 50 issues, and countless stories!

Since June 2022, BioS Reports has served as a vibrant platform bridging economic insights on animals and money, student experiences, lab rotations and global scientific outreach.

As we celebrate our 50th issue this July 2026, we have compiled key metrics that reflect our growth.

Here is a snapshot of our journey – the numbers that made it all happen!



A LOOK BACK

The Evolution of BioS

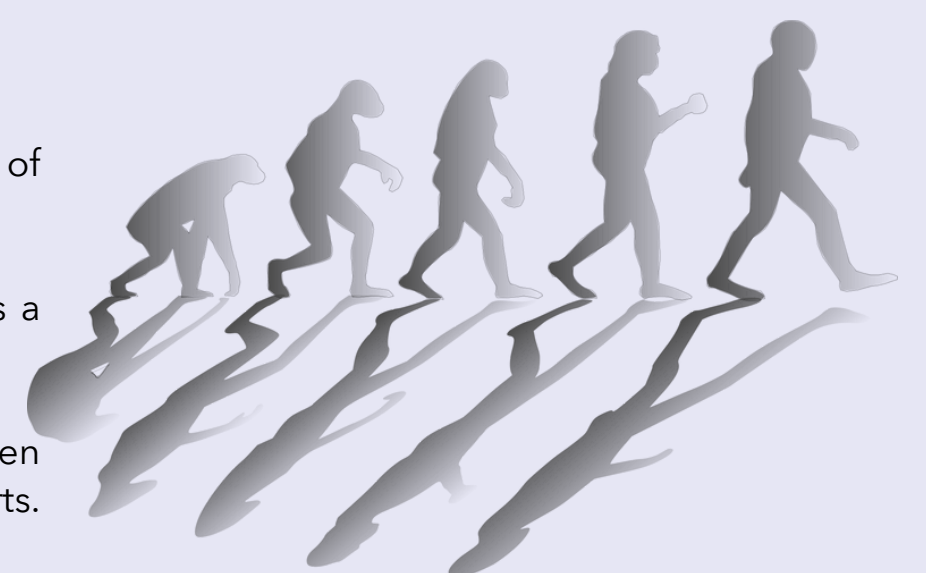
Patience Blossfeld Dodgson

Out of the genus of the Biology Faculty, the unique species called Biology in Society (BioS) arose. It was one that filled the niche of biology with a more societal focus, distinct from the molecular biology or the science communications program.

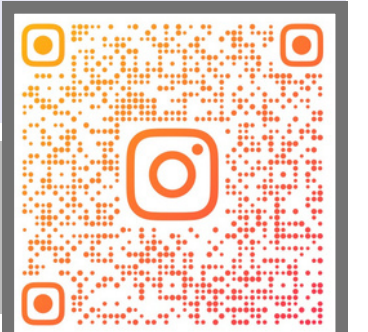
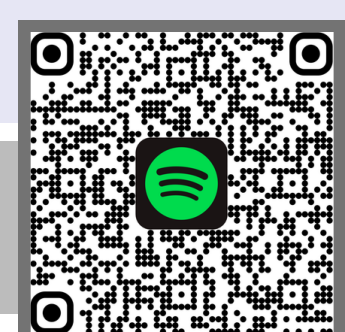
In 2022, the BioS species found some members of its population diverging into the BioS Reports subtype. Some have argued as a subspecies, others a subtype. While consensus has not been established, their relationship to Biology in Society is not in question.

In 2025, a mix of the original BioS and the BioS Reports subtype combined to form the Podcast variation. Due to the crossover between BioS Reports and the Podcast variation, there has been much debate about how separate they can be considered from BioS Reports. The difference in behavior with vocal calls instead of literary text has been well documented.

After 50 issues of BioS, with a lot of change, many wonder where the group shall go next, what behaviors they will adopt, and what new niches they shall find. To 50 more issues!



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FROM CAMPUS TO CAREER

Stories of alumni journeys, student jobs, and career opportunities during and after BioS.

From BioS Reports to the Newsroom: An Interview with Nele Kheim

Simon Schäfer & Philine Lea Hampe

Following her role as co-founder of BioS Reports, Nele decided to pursue a career in science communication. After completing her Master's degree in Biology, she is now honing her journalism skills as a trainee at *Freie Presse* in Chemnitz. Read on to learn more about her career journey and how her time at BioS still influences her work today.

What are the main tasks in your current job?

As a journalism trainee, I will spend two years rotating through different editorial departments of the newspaper to become an editor. Each office focuses on different regions or topics, such as culture or economy. Currently, I am working in the regional department of Chemnitz, reporting on what is happening in the city. The topics vary a lot, ranging from court trials to rescuing ducklings from a parking lot. Things often happen spontaneously, and I get to interview many different people. In my next station, the online editorial office, I hope to learn more about data journalism.

How did you find this job?

There is a [newsletter](#) that informs you about vacant journalistic entry level positions and traineeships.

How is your typical workday structured?

Currently, I start work around 9 a.m. I am often the first one in office – journalists somehow like to start quite late. Then I check my emails, work on an unfinished article, or arrange appointments for upcoming stories. At 10 a.m., we meet to discuss the topics of the day. After that, I write articles, prepare them for both the newspaper and website, and attend scheduled appointments. If something unexpected happens (for example a pepper spray incident at a school), I have to go there and find out what happened. Often I have lunch with my colleagues or the other trainees. At 2:30 p.m., we have another meeting to discuss new developments (there is always a lot going on in the city, I am telling you!). Afterwards, everyone continues working on their stories until the early evening.

What surprised you most about entering the professional world?

The amount of confidence you need. For example, negotiating salary – do it if you can! It felt super audacious to stand up for myself, even though it is totally normal to negotiate salary and conditions. And it paid off in my previous job as a project manager. Both in my previous and current position, I have needed to be confident and ask questions when I don't understand something, even though it feels like everyone else already knows the answer (trust me, they don't). I have also learned to be confident when thinking about solutions and having ideas. Often there is no "right" answer or way of doing something. It is a fine line between asking for help and finding solutions independently.

What skills do you need for this job?

Curiosity, empathy and time management.

What question do people usually ask when they hear about your job?

People are often very irritated when I tell them what I do compared to what I studied. They usually ask how and why I switched from biotechnology to journalism. My answer is that I want to combine my scientific background with professional journalistic communication and writing skills.

How much do you earn?

As a journalism trainee, I earn a fixed trainee salary. It is not particularly high and comparable to a 65% PhD position. However, it is enough to live on, especially in Chemnitz. I earn €2,600 gross per month, which translates to roughly €1,800 net.

What story that you have covered so far got stuck in your head?

We rescued a duck and her eight ducklings from a parking lot with no water nearby. We caught the ducklings and carried them for about one kilometre through the city while the mother duck followed us the whole way. She was clearly very stressed, and I felt really sorry for her. In the end, we released them at a nearby river, and we hope they live a good life there now.

How did studying BioS influence or prepare you for this job?

The discussions we had during the programme still help me think outside the box and critically evaluate data and studies – even in completely different fields such as economics. Although currently I am not applying much of my biological knowledge, it gives me a different perspective on many topics than most of my colleagues have.

What advice would you give to current BioS students?

Do internships at different places and also outside academia. It will help you discover what kinds of work and working environments you enjoy – and which ones you do not. This will make finding the right job a lot easier.



© Caspar Leder.

Together with the other journalism trainees, I worked on a project researching the economy of the Erzgebirge region. At the end of March, we traveled there to interview a forest worker about the wood economy and even got to ride in his harvester. While it was a mild 10°C in the city, we were surprised by heavy snowfall and winter temperatures in the Erzgebirge mountains.

SCIENCE UNPACKED - THE BIOS PODCAST

One Year of Science Unpacked: The BioS Podcast

Marit Scheuringer

One year ago we uploaded our very first episode, not really knowing where this little podcast adventure would take us.

Since then, we've published **9 episodes** and recorded **more than 4 hours of science**. Along the way, we've explored everything from hormones and anti-doping, flies and forensic entomology, and science vs. religion, to birth control and attraction, career paths in biotech, and even the future of sex robots.

Whether it's through our interviews or our *What's the Evidence?* episodes, our goal has always been the same: to make science understandable, spark curiosity, and tell the stories behind the research. Our favourite part is hearing scientists talk about the ideas, challenges, surprising discoveries, and people behind their work.

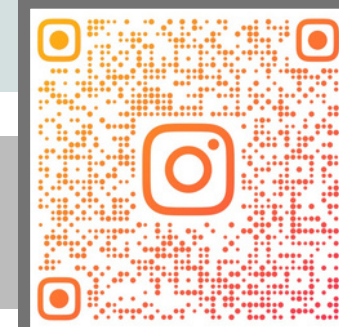
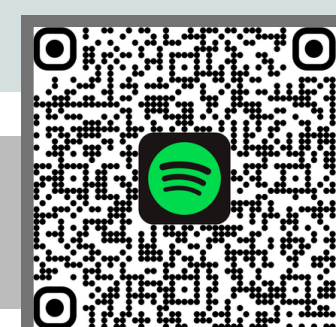
One of the biggest surprises? Our little student podcast has found listeners not only in Germany, but also in Turkey, Syria, Spain, Switzerland, the United States, Argentina, and Ghana. We never imagined our conversations would travel this far!

A huge thank you to everyone who has listened, shared an episode, agreed to be interviewed, or supported us over the past year. We couldn't have done it without you.

Now we have one birthday wish: **help us reach 100 followers!**

We're currently at **81**, so if you've been enjoying the podcast, we'd love it if you followed the show, shared your favourite episode with a friend, or recommended it to someone who's curious about science.

Now we'd love to hear from you: Which episode has been your favourite so far? And what topic should we unpack next?





50TH ISSUE OF BIOS REPORTS QUIZ - Jovana Delic

For the special 50th edition of BioS Reports, we returned with another quiz. Here, 25 questions await you based on the issues published since the second BioS Reports anniversary quiz. Learn fun facts about economically important animals from across the world, explore advice from professors and other experts, and see what you know about TU Dresden's iGEM projects. Like last time, sometimes you have to think of an answer yourself, sometimes more than one of the suggested answers is correct.

Submit your answers via the QR code on the last page – the first correct entry wins a prize!

Enjoy!

1. What is the main responsibility of Department 22 of the Saxon State Ministry for Social Affairs and Societal Cohesion's? [Issue 25]

- a) Coordinating hospital funding in Saxony
- b) Supervising food and feed safety and overseeing local food control authorities
- c) Developing agricultural subsidies for farmers

2. TU Dresden's 2024 ReFiBa iGEM team designed a system to recycle mixed cotton-PET textiles. Why are mixed textiles particularly difficult to recycle? [Issue 26]

- a) They contain toxic dyes that prevent recycling.
- b) They combine cotton with plastic fibers, whose crystalline structure resists complete degradation.
- c) They are too expensive to process.

3. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that typically occurs during the darker months of the year. Which lifestyle recommendations may help reduce the risk or severity of SAD? (Select all that apply.) [Issue 27]

- a) Spending time outdoors
- b) Regular exercise
- c) Keeping up social contact
- d) Taking vitamin D supplements

4. Why is antivenom treatment for taipan bites much more expensive than for brown snake bites? [Issue 28]

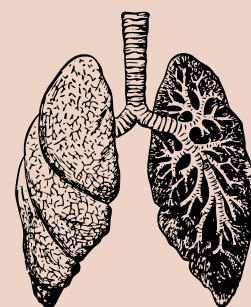
- a) Taipans produce much more venom, and their bites require significantly more antivenom.
- b) Taipan venom is harvested only from wild snakes.
- c) Taipan bites are treated in specialized hospitals only.



5. Professor Brixius is a botanist whose research combines plant science with history, art, and cultural heritage. Which interdisciplinary project would Professor Brixius most like to develop? [Issue 28]

- a) Sequencing the genomes of historical plant species
- b) Establishing a new botanical garden in Dresden
- c) Recreating historical cosmetic recipes together with biomedical scientists

6. Low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) is the current standard screening method for lung cancer. What is one advantage and one disadvantage that trained detection dogs could have over LDCT? [Issue 30]



7. After the overturning of Roe v. Wade, misleading TikTok videos promoted high-dose vitamin C as an abortion method. What daily dose was commonly recommended in these videos? [Issue 31]

- a) 500 mg
- b) 2,000 mg
- c) Up to 6,000 mg

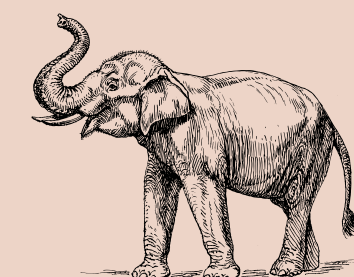
8. Koi are admired in Japanese culture as symbols of several virtues. Which of the following is not one of them? [Issue 32]

- a) Success
- b) Courage
- c) Wisdom



9. Elephant tourism has long been one of Thailand's most popular tourist attractions. As more elephants are moved to sanctuaries instead of tourist camps, why could their economic value become "negative"? [Issue 34]

- a) Their care costs may exceed the income they generate.
- b) They become too old to attract visitors.
- c) Their purchase price decreases over time.



10. Scientific publications are often associated with MSc theses. Which BioS courses described here also led to published research? (Select all that apply.) [Issue 35]

- a) Electron Microscopy
- b) Lab Rotation
- c) Scientific Writing
- d) Statistics in Biology

11. Dr. Sarah Hyder Iqbal is an independent Scientific Engagement Consultant who spoke about the role of science communication during the ISSCR webinar. Which statement best reflects her view of scientific progress? [Issue 36]

- a) Scientific progress depends mainly on technological innovation.
- b) Scientific progress relies on collaboration and connections between diverse communities.
- c) Scientific progress is driven primarily by individual researchers.

12. Which statement best explains why vultures provide valuable ecosystem services? [Issue 38]



- a) They naturally remove animal carcasses while limiting the spread of infectious diseases.
- b) They reduce livestock numbers by competing with predators.
- c) They replace the need for veterinary medicine in rural communities.

13. In the context of sustainable diets, what does the term "blue water footprint" refer to? [Issue 39]

- a) Rainwater used by crops
- b) Groundwater and surface water used during food production
- c) Water used during food processing and packaging only

14. Why do many Black Soldier Fly farmers produce feed mainly at the household level? [Issue 39]

- a) To reduce their own feed and fertilizer costs.
- b) Because commercial sales of insect protein are prohibited.
- c) Because Black Soldier Flies cannot be transported over long distances.



15. After spending a week as a shepherd's assistant, why does Professor Klaus Reinhardt recommend that professors seek experiences outside academia? [Issue 40]



- a) They can better understand the perspectives and realities of people whose work differs from their own.
- b) They can discover practical skills that directly improve their scientific research.
- c) They can better appreciate the amount of knowledge required in manual professions.

16. Despite their environmental and economic advantages, why have mealworms not yet become a common food source in Europe? [Issue 40]

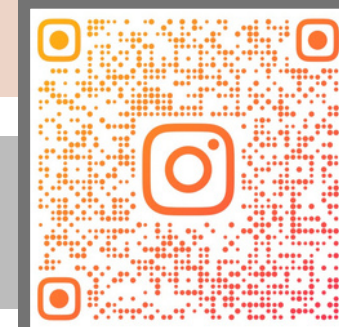
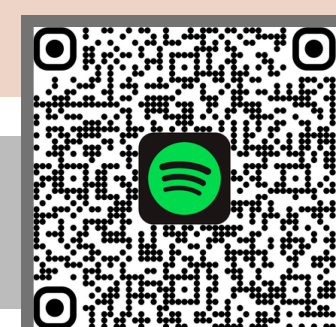
- a) Mealworms contain less protein than conventional livestock.
- b) Mealworms cannot be produced on a commercial scale.
- c) Many consumers remain hesitant about eating insects.

17. Nobel laureate Venki Ramakrishnan did not begin his career as a biologist. What was his original field of study and what led him to change fields early in his career? [Issue 41]

- a) Theoretical physics and he found his research lacked purpose.
- b) Chemistry and he was unable to find a job as a chemist.
- c) Medicine and he had always planned to become a biologist after graduation

18. How much is *Anagyrus lopezi* estimated to have saved the African cassava industry over 40 years? [Issue 41]

- a) US\$900 million–2 billion
- b) US\$9–20 billion
- c) US\$90–200 billion





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50TH ISSUE OF BIOS REPORTS QUIZ

19. The TRAPS project gave TUD's 2025 iGEM team the opportunity to collaborate with experienced researchers while developing a new method for RNA imaging. Besides laboratory skills, what did team members describe as one of the biggest personal benefits of participating? [Issue 42]

- a) Gaining confidence by working with experienced scientists as equals.
- b) Learning to manage a commercial biotechnology company.
- c) Receiving guaranteed job offers after the competition.

20. After completing a career that took her from medicine to research and eventually science communication, Dr. Olya Vvedenskaya was asked what advice she would give students choosing between academia and industry. What did she recommend as a good starting point? [Issue 43]

- a) Identify what you do not want first.
- b) Choose the option with the highest salary.
- c) Stay in academia until you have a permanent position.

21. Red-billed Queleas damage an estimated 15-20% of cereal crops in Africa each year. Approximately how much are these crop losses worth annually? [Issue 44]

- a) Around US\$500,000
- b) Around US\$80 million
- c) Around US\$3.8 billion



22. Seahorses are widely used in Traditional Chinese Medicine. What is their most common medicinal use? [Issue 45]



- a) Treating bacterial infections
- b) Lowering blood pressure
- c) Treating erectile dysfunction

23. The Spring School emphasized the relationship between laboratory science and society. According to the BioS students, what role can science communicators play in global health? [Issue 47]

- a) They focus on translating scientific papers into simpler language.
- b) They take the burden of communicating medical information off scientists.
- c) They help connect biological research with communities and policy decisions.

24. Friedrich Adam Scholler documented much more than preserved plant specimens during his botanical excursions. Which additional information did he systematically record? [Issue 49]

- a) Collection sites, plant characteristics, flowering periods, and common uses.
- b) Collection sites, local climate conditions, soil composition, and seasonal weather patterns.
- c) Collection sites, pollinating insects, seed dispersal, and plant diseases.

25. TU Dresden's 2026 MOCHI iGEM team aims to genetically engineer the yeast *Komagataella phaffii* to produce antibodies suitable for human use. What cellular process must be altered to make these antibodies compatible with humans? [Issue 49]

FEEDBACK & SUGGESTIONS

As BioS Reports continues to evolve over the next 50 issues, your feedback and suggestions are important to us.

Feedback on the Journal

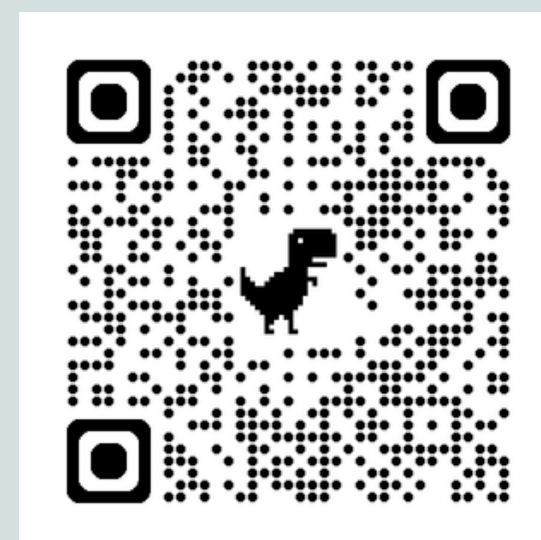
- Which section of BioS Reports do you like best and find most useful?
- What topics would you like to read about in our issues?
- Is there a section that could be improved?

Feedback on the Podcast

- Which episode has been your favourite so far?
- What topic should we unpack next?
- Who should we invite to be our guests?

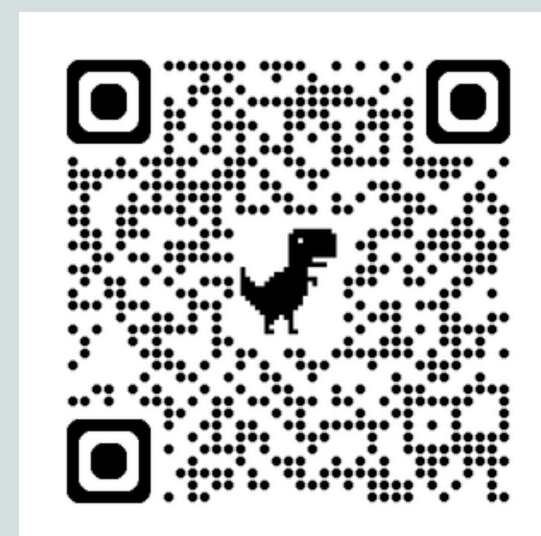
We look forward to receiving your feedback via the QR code!

You can also share your collaboration ideas, interview requests or other suggestions with us!



Share your feedback
anonymously!

**No personal information
required**



Join our quiz competition
and win a prize!

**Enter your email address to
participate**

