This paper reviews the literature on life-history evolution through 1974 and organizes the field into a series of major areas. It underlines the importance of risk-avoidance in evolution, presents a novel classification of fluctuating environments, and calls for experimental tests of major predictions. [The SCI® indicates that this paper has been cited in over 410 publications since 1976.]

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August 30, 1983

"When I arrived in Vancouver in January 1972 to begin work on my PhD, I went to talk to Peter Larkin about my plans. I told Larkin that I wanted to do field manipulation experiments of hypotheses on community structure. He disagreed. He told me that there were many other people doing that, and that I might be capable of something more original. He told me to take the next year to think about things, to read widely, and to avoid taking courses or starting a research project. My major professor, Conrad Wehrhahn, agreed with Larkin. I took the advice, wrote this paper as the introduction to my PhD proposal, and it changed my life.

"I believe the paper is cited for five reasons. First, it provided a timely, critical review at the start of the rapid growth of the specialty to which it refers. Second, it was published in *Quarterly Review of Biology*, which is read by people in many fields. Third, it provided a coherent framework on which to hang the diverse ideas extant in the literature. In this respect, it is beginning to outlive its usefulness. Fourth, it emphasized the role of risk-avoidance in evolution and gave it a catchy label, 'bet-hedging.' Fifth, it provided a novel classification of fluctuating environments. I have asked five or six colleagues why they cite this paper. About half of them report that they find the citation an easy way to review the literature. The rest emphasize the critical qualities of the paper. I find in rereading it that I am impressed by my energy at 26 and 27, and embarrassed by the brash arrogance with which I dissected papers whose intrinsic value has since grown on me.

"Brian Charlesworth recently wrote an excellent book in this area,1 and I have written three reviews that provide entry to the more current literature.2-4