

## EDITORIAL

# Out With the Old

In this, our last editorial as Editors-in-Chief (EICs) of the *Journal of Wildlife Management (JWM)*, we want to outline how this journal has changed in the past few years, make a few comments on our editorial philosophy and what we hope we accomplished, and make a recommendation for expanding the publishing opportunities in The Wildlife Society (TWS).

But first we want to recognize and acknowledge Carly Johnson, our primary editorial assistant throughout our tenure as EICs of this journal. Carly, also a graduate student at Oregon State University, is an extremely efficient and insightful individual who substantially improved the processing of manuscripts. As noted below, one of our accomplishments was implementation of the online manuscript processing system, AllenTrack. To put it fairly, Carly helped Morrison implement the system; it was not the other way around! The Wildlife Society owes a great debt of thanks to Carly for her excellent work.

A good deal was accomplished regarding the editorial and publishing processes during the past 3 years; namely, initiating AllenTrack, merging *jWM* and *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, eliminating a backlog of unpublished papers, and substantially speeding the time from submission to print. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the leadership provided by past-Presidents Lancia and Brown, and current President Organ, along with the support of Council and TWS staff. We also expanded the definition of "wildlife" to include terrestrial invertebrates; we hope that new definition will continue to be used. We do feel good about leaving the journal with no excessive backlog of manuscripts and with an on-time print schedule.

Several decades ago (you know you are getting old when you talk in decades rather than in years), Morrison submitted a manuscript to *JWM* that challenged the way we were approaching studies of wildlife-habitat relationships and offered some ideas for new directions. That manuscript was rejected, with an explanation that he did not yet have the standing in the field to make such sweeping recommendations. Situations such as that experienced by Morrison certainly influenced the way we managed manuscripts during our tenure as EICs of this journal. Morrison, and then Block after he joined the editorial team, took the philosophy that our job as EICs was to do everything we could to get manuscripts published. Granted, we often gave borderline manuscripts a chance to be published rather than rejecting them outright, but we did so because we saw value in what the authors had to offer. We ultimately based our decisions on the underlying strength of the study design and resulting data set; statistics and

interpretations can be changed, but the value of a study starts with the foundation of design. So, when in doubt, we accepted a manuscript. And we seldom rejected an opinion piece. Let the marketplace decide what is of value. We hope you appreciated that philosophy because we never viewed ourselves as the keepers of some mythical "good" science. We treated our Associate Editors as "editors" and accepted their recommendations virtually all of the time. We heard that all the time: "only publish good science." Well, after about 15 years of combined experience as Associate Editors and EICs of *jWM*, we guess we now have standing to reflect on the decisions we thought were appropriate. We selected good Associate Editors representing a broad diversity of backgrounds and expertise, and trusted their judgment; to do otherwise would have put us as keepers of "good science," and neither of us cared to place ourselves in that position. And, neither of us is so insecure that we fear what readers will think about what appears in the pages of this journal. The review process is imperfect, and we can all learn from everything that is published in the pages of *JWM*.

And we virtually never returned a manuscript without a thorough review. After all, if you took the time to write it, the least we can do is take the time to review it. In that manner, every author receives a service from TWS, and hopefully that service helps with acceptance of the manuscript elsewhere.

Speaking of elsewhere, we have a suggestion for TWS that would expand service to most professionals. Namely, we recommend that TWS implement perhaps 2 regional journals, say *Western journal of Applied Wildlife Science* and *Eastern journal of Applied Wildlife Science*. Many manuscripts are rejected from *jWM* because they have only regional applicability, such as many short-term studies and case studies. At present, when we reject such manuscripts from *JWM* we recommend "submitting to a regional journal," which sends people away from TWS and toward other organizations. To us, that immediately lowers the possibility of recruitment of new members. Additionally, it shows that there is a need for an outlet for relatively small and more narrowly focused papers in wildlife ecology and management. We rejected about 50% of the submissions we received. But, had we had another outlet within TWS, we probably would have rejected another 15-30% of the submissions and redirected them to a regional TWS journal. In fact, such manuscripts could be transferred to the regional outlet in a manner that would streamline the review and publication process. Such regional journals would also promote additional publication by agency biologists because, from personal discussions, the majority of agency wildlife biologists do not consider their work appropriate for *JWM*,

or have only a vague understanding of the peer review and publication process. These regional journals would also increase the likelihood that research important to wildlife managers would be available and accessible for them to use. Lastly, regional outlets would relieve the ever increasing pressure on *JWM*. Now that *JWM* and *Wildlife Society Bulletin* are successfully merged, and *The Wildlife Profes-*

*sional* has been launched, we think the idea of one or more regional journals should be seriously explored.

Lastly, we welcome the new EIC, Michael Chamberlain. In with the new.

**-Michael L. Morrison and William M. Block**  
*Editors-in-Chief*