

Notes from the Editor

May 13, 2022

The winter issue for 2022, the first of the year, is coming a bit late due to the retirement of my longtime layout editor (see my Notes from the Editor in issue 107-3 for more info). But thankfully, due to the willingness of some amazing CDFW employees, I now have the help I need to complete layouts for the Journal.

This issue contains six excellent articles on topics varying from elk to snails to fish and fire. The first article, a joint venture between UC-Davis and CDFW scientists, explores an approach for estimating the abundance of tule elk using spatially explicit capture-recapture (SCR) models combined with a less time-intensive single-visit survey to collect fecal pellets. The authors compared this single-visit approach to an earlier multi-visit survey and found that it worked well given the high density of elk in a concentrated area. The next two articles cover the use of both macro- and micro-habitat suitability models for the Trinity bristle snail. Dr. Sullivan, a CDFW scientist, discusses the results of his modeling for the management of these endangered snails. Articles four and five provide important information on the population density and habitat of the San Pedro Mártir rainbow trout and the status and distribution of Arroyo chub, respectively. The issue concludes with a study that examined machine learning to understand patterns of burn severity from a complex of fires that occurred in the Diablo Range of northern California in 2020.

We have two new and one leaving Associate Editor this issue. We are losing a long-time editor, Neil Clipperton. Neil has worked as a biologist for CDFW since 2006 and has served as California's statewide bird conservation coordinator since 2013. He has collaborated with conservation partners through leadership on interagency teams, technical working groups, and policy teams, including the Pacific Flyway Council, Central Valley Joint Venture, and Tricolored Blackbird Working Group. Neil has worked with Department staff across the state to identify high priority monitoring and research needs, secure funding for project implementation, and collaborate with research partners. He has also conducted status reviews for bird species petitioned for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), led policy development for birds in California, consulted on management of special status bird species, and ensured large-scale conservation plans adequately consider the needs of birds. Neil recently accepted a new position in the Department as the supervisor of a new CESA Conservation Unit in the Wildlife Branch. Neil served as an associate editor for five years.

Replacing Neil as our non-game bird expert is Matt Toenies. Matt is an Environmental Scientist in CDFW's Wildlife Diversity Program and Cannabis Program. In 2014, he received a B.S. in Natural Resources-Wildlife Management from the University of Minnesota in Crookston. He then completed a M.S. in Ecology at Penn State University in 2017, where he researched shifts in avian community composition following die-off of eastern hemlock forests due to non-native insect invasion. Before joining CDFW, Matt worked in a variety of wildlife positions with diverse taxa, including mammals, waterfowl, herpetofauna, and passerines. In his two years with CDFW, he has worked with his team to develop methods for efficient bird and herpetofauna monitoring and data processing using recent technological advances and machine learning-based species identification. Matt has coauthored papers on research conducted both outside and within his CDFW work and has served as a reviewer for other researchers' manuscripts. He is excited to be joining as an Associate Editor for the California Fish and Wildlife Journal.

Also joining the Journal staff is Mark Gard. Mark is a Senior Hydraulic Engineer in the Conservation Engineering Branch, specializing in fish passage, hydraulic modeling, and anadromous salmonid habitat restoration. Mark has a BS and MS in Civil Engineering and a PhD in Ecology, where he studied conservation of native fish in the South Yuba River. Prior to joining CDFW, Mark was a Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working on instream flow studies, including collecting data for and developing habitat suitability criteria, and monitoring habitat restoration projects. Mark has published 20 articles in peer reviewed journals, largely focusing on habitat modeling of anadromous salmonids and fish passage assessments.

The Journal will have two special issues this year, both covering the proceedings of earlier conferences. The first will be the proceedings of the 14th Biennial WAFWA Deer and Elk Workshop. The Workshop brings together biologists from governments, universities, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and beyond to share research and discuss common challenges to conservation of deer and elk across western North America. Information shared during this biennial meeting is invaluable to conservation and management. This special issue will serve as a conduit for archiving the important work, discussions, and scientific advances shared during the Workshop. The other will cover the recent biennial CDFW Science Symposium—a conference for CDFW scientists statewide to share and discuss the research being conducted throughout the organization. The proceedings will serve to chronicle the important research, discussions, and scientific advances shared during the Symposium as well as provide this information to those outside of CDFW so the public can see the amazing work that CDFW scientists accomplish.

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California Fish and Wildlife Journal