

Notes from the Editor

June 30, 2022

While the second issue of 2022, the spring issue, is coming a bit late, it is full of excellent articles on some important topics. This issue is one of the most taxonomically diverse issues we have had in quite some time—covering everything from freshwater and marine fish to birds, amphibians, rodents, snails, and even a domestic species.

The first article in the issue, written by two local wildlife consultants, covers the reproductive success of a raptor, the osprey, in different habitats of central California; these researchers found that the type of water body was most significant in determining productivity of the species. The next article authored by the head researcher of The Wildlife Project discusses the current distribution and spread of “...one of the most negatively impactful invasive species on earth...” (Alvarez and Alvarez, this issue), the channeled apple snail. Researchers from multiple consulting research firms came together to author the third article, a note on the extreme dehydration and subsequent rehydration and recovery of a California tiger salamander—a species that is both federally and state listed. In the fourth article, David Laabs and his co-authors examined a California-endemic rodent, the San Joaquin pocket mouse, providing information on its distribution, morphology between sexes, and chromosome composition; they discovered the species has 52 diploid chromosomes—something that had never been found in the genus. Next, some current and former CDFW researchers studied the diet of both larval and juvenile longfin smelt in the San Francisco Bay Estuary, determining that fish size and the density of prey were the primary drivers of diet in that location. Researchers from the Pfleger Institute, the Nature Conservancy, and UC-San Diego’s Scripps Institute of Oceanography came together for the sixth article on a newer method of fishing for swordfish—deep-drop fishing—which the researchers found significantly increases catch; they suggested this increase, along with the limited information available on private-vessel catches, suggests a need for additional monitoring efforts to evaluate the impacts of this new method. Lastly, a paper by a CSU-Sacramento researcher reviews the impacts that domesticated ferrets can have in California and across the country on native wildlife as well as agriculture and human health.

I have three new editors to introduce in this issue. The first is Tom Batter, the Statewide Elk and Pronghorn Coordinator with the Wildlife Branch; Tom is replacing Kristin Denryter as our ungulate specialist. Kristin took a job as the ungulate physiologist at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. While we will miss Kristin greatly, we are excited to have Tom on board! Tom earned two B.S. degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Environmental Science and Fisheries and Wildlife. He then joined CDFW in 2012 as a scientific aide with the Wildlife Investigations Laboratory, and later took on a field technician role with the Sacramento Valley red fox project—a collaborative effort between CDFW and the Mammalian Ecology and Conservation Unit (MECU) at UC-Davis. Tom went on to earn both his M.S. and PhD studying tule elk population demographics and genetics as a member of the MECU at UC, Davis in partnership with CDFW. Dr. Batter spent a year in the Wildlife South program covering Western San Bernardino and Riverside Counties and a year in the same role covering Mendocino County out of the Northern Region’s Coastal Wildlife Program. Dr. Batter is primarily interested in large mammal population research and monitoring, including demographic and genetic connectivity, to guide policy and management actions.

Next, Lauren Miele joins Grace Meyers as our second Junior Editor. Recall that junior editors are those who do not have significant publishing experience and so are paired with regular Associate Editors in

reviewing articles to gain experience. Lauren joined the Timberland Conservation and Fire Resiliency Program at headquarters as a fire resiliency scientist in January 2022. Her role is to provide technical guidance, support, and engage in statewide policy issues regarding biological resource protection and fire resiliency. Lauren graduated from Chico State with a B.S. in Biology in 2015 and then held several positions around CDFW. She started off as a CESA scientific aid in the Habitat Conservation Planning Branch working on permit tracking, became a fish and wildlife scientific aid at Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area working on post-construction restoration monitoring for special-status species, and then became a senior laboratory assistant in Stockton working on the Zooplankton Study. From 2017–2021, Lauren worked as an environmental scientist for the California Department of Water Resources where she assisted with implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management of fish passage and restoration projects for salmonids and sturgeon in the Yolo Bypass.

Lastly, I am pleased to introduce Dr. Anne Hilborn. Anne is an ecologist with a background in carnivore behavior and conservation. She worked for the Serengeti Cheetah Project in Tanzania for several years and did field work on sockeye salmon and grizzly bears in Bristol Bay, Alaska. During her Master's at Imperial College London and her PhD at Virginia Tech, she focused on quantifying cheetah hunting behavior. While at Virginia Tech, she taught courses on mammalogy and wildlife field techniques and started using social media for science communication. During her postdoc at UC-Riverside she continued her interest in teaching and created online classes in ecology, conservation, and global change biology. She joined CDFW's CESA Conservation Unit in 2022 and evaluates petitions to list species under the California Endangered Species Act. Anne replaces Dr. Justin Dellinger as our carnivore specialist; Dr. Dellinger recently joined UC-Davis as the lead for the California Mountain Lion Project.

The next issue of the Journal will be a special issue on deer and elk. The issue will serve as 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. So, keep an eye out for this important and interesting upcoming issue!

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