Notes from the Editor

December 29, 2023

2023's final issue includes a number of interesting articles. The first is a research note by frequent contributor Jeff Alvarez of The Wildlife Project. He and his co-authors discuss the co-occurrence of two species of ranid frogs, the California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*; listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)) and the foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*; many populations of which are now listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA)). The authors wanted to document such cases because management actions may often be focused on only one species, and this may have negative implications for the sympatric species.

The next article is by another frequent author in our journal, Dr. Brian Cypher and several members of his team at the Endangered Species Recovery Program (ESRP). (A sidenote: Dr. Cypher recently stepped down as director of ESRP and Dr. Jaime Rudd, formerly of CDFW, has taken on the role of Director. However, I am sure Dr. Cypher will remain engaged in all of the incredible work the ESRP does, and we will likely continue to see his name on publications in the future.) The article focused on the differences between the attributes of San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) dens and sympatric California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) burrows. As California ground squirrels are considered a nuisance species in some areas, Dr. Cypher and his colleagues were concerned that control measures may impact the ESA- and CESA-listed San Joaquin kit fox if dens are misidentified as ground squirrel burrows.

The third article of the issue by Dr. John Wehausen of the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Foundation provides a simple genetic method that can be used to differentiate the scat of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) from mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Dr. Wehausen goes on to discuss how this method can be used to identify colonization events for bighorn sheep—something that historically was not considered part of the species' life history. He found evidence of at least two range expansions in California.

The last research article, authored by numerous people including two scientists in CDFW's Game Management Program, focuses on a habitat suitability assessment for tule elk (*Cervus canadensis nannodes*). Their modeling identified over 500,000 ha of suitable habitat for tule elk that is currently unoccupied. They discuss the management implications of these results including potential translocations and highway crossings to re-establish elk populations in these habitats.

And lastly, Dr. Vernon Bleich, former Editor-in-Chief, continues to provide the Journal with excellent book reviews—this time on Maurice Hornocker's memoir *Cougars on a Cliff.*

We had no new or leaving editors this quarter—maybe our editorial staff has again stabilized for a bit.

A reminder that the Journal has a subscriber listserv. Anyone interested in receiving updates from the Journal and being notified when new issues are available can **subscribe here**.

Happy New Year!

Ange Darnell Baker, PhD

Editor-in-Chief
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