Notes from the Editor

March 28, 2024

The first issue of 2024 includes a number of fascinating articles. Tim Bean, a professor at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (to me, the *inferior* Cal Poly, as I currently teach at Cal Poly Humboldt), and his collaborators from CDFW and University of California, Davis summarized the results of their study to use noninvasive sampling of fecal pellets of the endangered giant kangaroo rat to estimate population size. They compared their method to traditional mark-recapture estimates and found the estimates to be generally similar. The authors conclude that noninvasive genetic sampling can overcome many of the limitations of live-trapping for small mammals and suggest that the approach be tested in additional taxa and systems.

The next article is a review paper by Dan Airola on survey methods for the purple martin, a species that has declined significantly in population and range in the last 40 years but has received relatively little attention locally, especially given that their breeding habitat in California is often quite different from that in the rest of their range. Dan presents a variety of methods available to monitor nesting purple martins in California that should improve efficiency and accuracy of surveys and provide comparable results that can be used to evaluate regional or statewide trends.

Next is a note from a veterinarian from Washington State University, in collaboration with CDFW, describing a unique type of tumor, a granulosa cell tumor, in a sea otter, something that has never been document before in the species, or even within the Family Mustelidae except for domestic ferrets.

The following article by two CDFW scientists, Miranda Haggerty and Chuck Valle, documents incidental take of giant sea bass in the gill net fishery. Giant sea bass, an apex predator in southern California's kelp forests, has seen drastic population declines in recent decades as a result of overfishing. These researchers combed through landing records, logbooks, and federal observer data to determine the magnitude, location, and age of incidentally caught giant sea bass. They found no evidence that commercial fishers were targeting the species, and, on average, giant sea bass were landed on 4.2% of gill net trips from 1994–2021. They observed that multiple fishery-independent sources indicate populations are increasing, suggesting that current protection measures may be effective but note that it is challenging to interpret the full impact of the commercial fishery without consistent observer coverage.

Lastly, an article by a researcher at Oregon State University, with collaborators from the National Park Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and CDFW, documents the movement of desert bighorn sheep at underpasses along two major interstates (I-15 and I-49) near the Mojave National Preserve. They found that while many other species regularly used the underpasses, they did not find the bighorns using them, even when they added a novel water source (guzzlers) nearby. They concluded that, despite underpasses, these interstates likely have low permeability for the species due to location, design, and bighorn behavior.

I have one new editor, Kim Walker, who is replacing Kristen Elsmore as one of our marine editors. Kim has been with CDFW in the Marine Region for 10 years. She started as a Scientific Aide and was hired full time as an Environmental Scientist in 2014. Kim is a southern California girl and received her bachelor's and master's degrees from California State University, Fullerton, mostly focused on bay and estuarine ecology and California's only native oyster, *Ostrea lurida*. At CDFW, Kim researches and manages

California’s marine finfish species. We also recently lost our big game editor, Tom Batter, who accepted a position outside of CDFW.

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!

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California Fish and Wildlife Journal