

Notes from the Editor

December 27, 2024

The final issue of 2024 is coming out just under the wire!

The first article in the issue, by CDFW scientists, Dr. Dylan Stompe and Dr. James Hobbs, details an experimental study using gillnetting to sample larger fish in the San Francisco Estuary (SFE). Traditional monitoring uses methods that focus on small fishes or juvenile life stages of larger fishes, missing the adult life stage of many fish that inhabit the SFE. In the study, they successfully caught 16 different species—many of which were significantly larger than those caught using traditional sampling methods—demonstrating the value of this method to sample larger fish and better inform the monitoring of large fish in the SFE.

The next article, authored by a Cal Poly SLO graduate student and his advisor in collaboration with a CDFW scientist, focused on facilitated translocation efforts. They assessed translocation results of a soft release for CESA-listed San Joaquin antelope squirrels (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) at a site with and without giant kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys ingens*), which is an endangered species and ecosystem engineer. They found survival of squirrels to be the lowest at the site without giant kangaroo rats, suggesting that the positive impacts of a burrowing ecosystem engineer may outweigh the potential negative impacts from competition.

The third article of this issue is authored by frequent contributor and current President of the Western Section of the Wildlife Society, Jeff Alvarez, in collaboration from a scientist at Stillwater Sciences, a Berkeley-based consulting firm. This research note details the above ground phenology of western spadefoots (*Spea hammondi*) highlighting some resulting management recommendations based on their observations.

And the final article of the issue focused on the ability and accuracy of using tooth cementum rings to age bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) by a researcher at University of California's White Mountain Research Center in Bishop, an anthropology professor from Lassen Community College, and a professor from UC Berkeley's Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. This study re-examined cementum ring aging accuracy for bighorn using a blind test of known-age samples from two ecologically different regions in California, using three different laboratory techniques (histological, petrographic, and grinding). The researchers found substantially more errors than previously reported for such methods, particularly with the grinding method. They concluded that, at least for male bighorn which can be aged using horn rings, cementum-based aging is unlikely to provide accurate information.

The issue concludes with a review of Dr. Brian Cypher's new book, *The San Joaquin Kit Fox*. Dr. Cypher, who has contributed to several of the Journal's issues in the past few years, retired last year as the director of the Endangered Species Recovery Program at California State University, Stanislaus.

No new editors to introduce this issue, but I may have a few new ones early next year (fingers crossed).

As always, 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 to all of our readers!

Ange Darnell Baker, PhD

Editor-in-Chief

California Fish and Wildlife Journal