

Notes from the Editor

The spring issue of 2021 is following the same pattern as the winter issue in coming late, and likely for the same reason—the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the research community. Amazingly, this is the first issue in quite a while where I have no new Associate Editors to introduce—perhaps I *finally* have enough to cover the diverse manuscript topics the Journal receives.

This issue begins with a fascinating study examining the effectiveness of four different acoustic recorders for bird detection as well as assessing the effectiveness of a new AI method of automated species identification. Technology in the wildlife field has advanced significantly in recent years providing researchers with methods that are less invasive, more efficient, and cheaper than ever before. The researchers in this study, who are part of CDFW's Wildlife Branch, discovered that the lowest-cost recorder (which is also significantly smaller than traditional acoustic recorders) performed just as well as higher-cost recorders—and that species detections were significantly higher than traditional, point-count methods! And the automated species identification platform, BirdNET, was extremely accurate, correctly identifying 96% of species—this truly has significant implications for future bird research.

The next article, a combined effort from CDFW's Office of Spill Prevention and Response unit and the Chevron Corporation, describes a trial to compare two methods for sampling oil sheens in marine environments. They concluded that the material used by CDFW, a fiberglass material, and that used by the U.S. Coast Guard, a tetrafluoroethylene-fluorocarbon (TFE-fluorocarbon) polymer net, were both suitable methods of collection material for chemical forensic analyses.

The third article, with researchers from the Forest Service, USGS, and Oregon State University, focuses on the distribution of both anadromous (steelhead) and resident (rainbow) trout in northwestern California. They found a widespread distribution of fish that had resident mothers, suggesting the importance of preserving freshwater conditions that are suitable for resident trout, notably maintaining stream flows throughout the dry season. This information is especially relevant and timely given the state's current drought-conditions.

Next up, a very interesting article that used Western Message Petroglyphs—a type of picture-writing from the late 1800s/early 1900s, likely used by non-Native Americans with a knowledge of Native American symbols—found in the San Francisco Bay Area to demonstrate the likely presence of a beaver lodge in the area of Alameda Creek in the late 1800s. This record was possibly the last one before beavers were locally extirpated as a result of the fur trade.

The last article, again by CDFW researchers from the Wildlife Branch, compares a commonly used method for surveys of herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians), visual encounter surveys (VES) with cover boards, to a more novel method which combines a drift fence with camera traps. They determined that the drift fence/camera trap technique outperformed the VES detecting significantly more herp species—as well as a number of other small animals, including small mammals, birds, and invertebrates. Again, as with the first article, many will be pleased to find that a newer method using modern technology can replace the extremely time-intensive method of on-the-ground species surveys—we

can get substantially more data with considerably less time and effort, a win-win situation for wildlife researchers.

The issue concludes with a book review of George B. Schaller's *Into Wild Mongolia* by Dr. Vernon Bleich (former editor of this journal) and a tribute in memoriam of Andrew M. Pauli, a long-time wildlife biologist for the Department.

Earlier this summer, we were finally able to complete the special issue on CESA (California Endangered Species Act), which, with 27 articles, marked the largest issue the Journal has ever published (473 pages!)—and an issue that I personally am extremely proud of; my special issue guest editorial team put in a huge amount of work to get the issue completed, and it shows! And keep your eyes out for our final special issue of the year which will cover the topic of Human-Wildlife Interactions.

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