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The Wildlife Society Bulletin's Legacy

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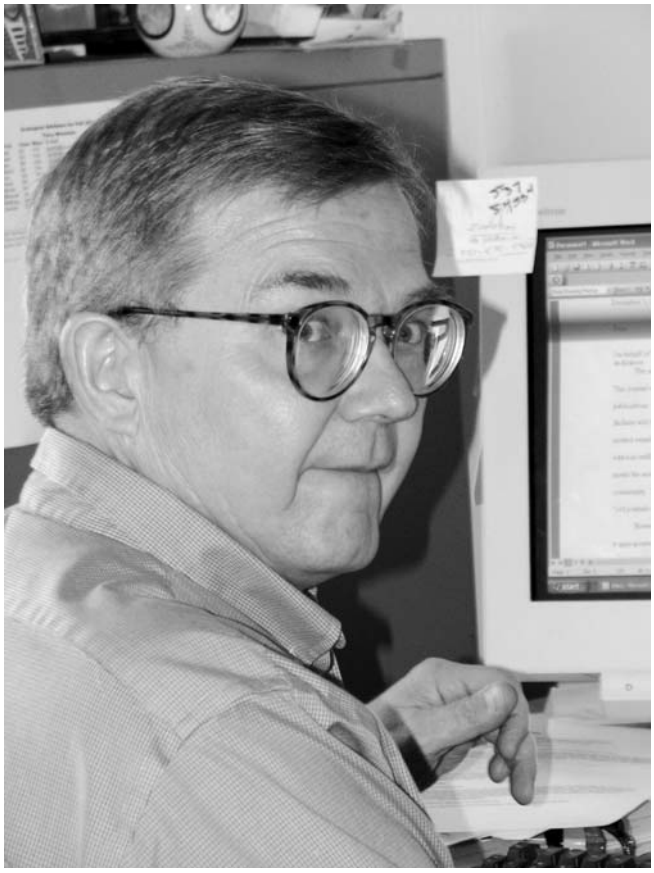
EDITORIAL

The Wildlife Society Bulletin's Legacy



The new *Journal of Wildlife Management* (JWM) will debut in January 2007. This journal will represent a new era for The Wildlife Society (TWS) and its publications. As part of that transition, this issue will be the last time *The Wildlife Society Bulletin* (WSB) will be published as a separate publication. In the future you will find its contents nestled seamlessly within the covers of the new JWM. Dr. Michael Morrison, his editorial staff, and Associate Editors are working hard to ensure that the new journal meets the needs of the membership and the wildlife conservation and management community. Thus, to borrow from the hallowed words of General Douglas MacArthur "old journals never die, they just fade away."

However, before we close the doors of the WSB editorial office for good, we felt it appropriate to leave the membership with some parting thoughts regarding the history and legacy of WSB. We would be remiss if we did not include some basic statistics that attest to the impact of the "*Bulletin*" and the volunteer commitment of TWS members to excellence in publishing. The key word in the last sentence is "volunteers." Without the volunteers, neither WSB nor JWM would have been possible. To date, WSB has benefited from the services of 14 Editors-in-Chief (EIC), 300-plus associate editors and editorial panel members, and 12,628 peer-reviews. With this issue, WSB has published 34 volumes consisting of 137 issues containing 3,157 manuscripts and articles (this includes only those published, not those rejected) contributed by 8,426 authors resulting in 23,643 pages.

A partial history of TWS publications was published in 1987 in WSB as part of the Society's 50th Anniversary (Hickey et al. 1987). One of the principal objectives identified by the TWS constitution in 1937 was the publication of a journal (JWM) of high-quality original scientific articles in wildlife research (Bennitt et al. 1937). During its early days, all JWM manuscripts were handled by one editor. The transition to an EIC process that included associate editors did not come about for JWM and WSB until 1979.

Almost from its inception, JWM editors were concerned that the publication was lacking in information that could be directly applied to management. Although this issue was discussed in TWS circles for several years, it wasn't until May 1972 that WSB emerged. This new journal was TWS' attempt to embrace a wider audience, with the ultimate goal of attracting new members. In addition to reporting on TWS business, WSB would include articles on contemporary management, education, administration, law enforcement, and review articles on the philosophy and history of wildlife management as well as other topics of pertinent interest that were deemed not appropriate for JWM. The original journal was designed to be attractive and distinctive, yet retain enough similarity to JWM that manuscripts could be freely interchanged. Lastly, the page limit was set at 32 pages. However, the very first issue exceeded this count by 40 pages.

This problem was to reoccur throughout WSB's publication history as EICs struggled with trying to publish an abundance of high-quality manuscripts in a timely fashion. Throughout its history, the acceptance rate for WSB manuscripts hovered around 50%. Given that in some years, EICs received nearly 400 manuscripts, and space was allocated for only about 160, some authors would wait over a year to see their article in print.

Another unique WSB feature was the inclusion of photographs and biographical sketches of the authors. This feature continued to be distinctive in the world of scientific publishing and was very popular with WSB contributors.

In 1995, under Bruce Thompson's leadership, WSB busted out of its traditional black-and-white 7 × 10-inch design into a full color front page and an 8.5 × 11-inch format. In addition to regular manuscript articles and features, it now included special sections devoted to timely

management and conservation issues. Throughout its evolution, TWS members continued to express a strong interest in, and support for, WSB, preferring it to the old JWM almost 4:1 in terms of subscriptions rates.

But alas, nothing is truly ever static. In response to changes in the publishing world and economics, TWS Council implemented a decision designed to better serve both TWS membership and the wildlife management community. The new JWM, coupled with electronic manuscript submission and review process and with Allen Press publishing capabilities, will ensure that the highest-quality wildlife science and management information is available at the fingertips of managers, biologists, scientists, and other decision makers. This was WSB's and remains JWM's and TWS' legacy. Over the next few years, this rich legacy will be preserved in an electronic format. This will not only preserve this work, but make it available to a wider audience. I, for one, cannot think of a better way to mainstream the art and science of wildlife management.

I would like to call your attention to the final WSB report published in the back of this issue. This report contains insight into the legacy I have been referring to. More important than the names listed are the countless hours of dedicated, tireless, and unselfish service given in the name of wildlife conservation and management that these names represent.

My special thanks to Warren Ballard, my WSB EIC predecessor, for some sage advice regarding editorial office staff and operations. Because I followed this advice, I had the great pleasure of meeting and working with Janet Wallace. Janet, in my opinion and that of hundreds of WSB contributors, may have been one of the best WSB editorial assistants ever. Borrowing from a Jack Nicholas movie line, "she made me want to be a better person and EIC." Janet and I were aptly assisted by Tracy Estabrook (Science Assistant) and Rebecca Britton (Technical Assistant). Together they made a formidable team that always worked with the best interest of TWS membership and authors in mind. I also wish to acknowledge Texas Tech University for housing the editorial office this past year and Utah State University Extension Service, College of Natural Resources and the Department of Wildland Resources for granting me the time to pursue this editorship.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Linda, my spouse, for her support and forgiving my dereliction of duties on the home front. (Honey really, just think about how much money we saved on watering by letting the lawn die out and the yard go wild). Such remains also part of the untold legacy of WSB and the EIC.

Literature Cited

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