

## Publications Advisory Board

**Committee Members:** P. Stapp (Publications Director). *Journal of Mammalogy*: Editor-in-Chief – L. Ruedas; Associate Editors – A. Baird, L. Carraway, M. Cherry, R. Constantine, A. Cruz-Neto, N. Dochtermann, J. Esselstyn, D. Ge, J. Goheen, L. Hayes, J. Hopkins, T. Jezkova, S. Loeb, K. Monteith, B. Moore, R. Moratelli, T. Morisaka, R. Ojeda, J. Ortega Reyes, J. Pauli, C. Pavey, R. Reyna-Huertado, K. Rowe, J. Scheibe, T. Smyser, B. Swanson, M. Vieira, P. Zollner; Special Features Editor – R. Powell; Book Review Editor – M. Kalcounis-Ruppell; Associate Editor for Language Coordination – V. Hayssen. *Mammalian Species*: Editor-in-Chief –M. Hamilton; Associate Editors –C. Cooper, S. Eiseb, C. Kilpatrick, D. Leslie, P. Owen, R. Rose, S. Solari. *Oxford University Press*: R. Dowdy (Journal Manager), R. Gaddy (Advertising), S. Larche (Scholar One), F. McDonald (Lead/Publisher), S. Trostle (Marketing), S. Wolper (J&J; Editorial Assistant).

**Mission:** The Publications Advisory Board (PAB) oversees the publications of the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM), which includes the *Journal of Mammalogy (JM)* and *Mammalian Species (MS)*. The PAB sets editorial policy for ASM and nominates editors for approval by the Board of Directors. The PAB typically is composed of current editors, who are involved in reviewing and accepting papers and the technical production of the publications. Key publishing partners from Oxford University Press (OUP) are invited to serve as *ex officio* non-voting members.

### Information Items:

**(1) General Information.** ASM is in the second year of a five-year publishing contract with Oxford University Press (OUP). The pandemic exacerbated ongoing challenges with the timely and error-free production of the journals, but I am hopeful that corrective actions taken by OUP, combined with changes in our structure and procedures described below, will help us regain our footing in the last half of 2021 and going forward. Highlights of the past year include the publication of the 1000<sup>th</sup> *Mammalian Species* account, authored by Ginny Hayssen and Paula Noonan, 50 years after ASM began regularly publishing MS (the first account was published in 1969, with accounts published annually beginning in 1971). Congratulations to Meredith and the entire MS team for reaching this milestone!

Last year ASM implemented a Hardship Publishing Grants program to assist member-authors who lacked institutional or grant funds to pay member-rate page charges for publishing in *JM*. Since February 2020 I have received 25 applications, six of which were for manuscripts originally submitted in 2019, for which authors qualified for full page-charge waivers under our previous agreement. Of the remaining 19 manuscripts, approximately 10 have been accepted for publication thus far, and have been awarded publishing grants of \$200 each. Nearly all of the awardees were researchers from developing countries that are suffering economic crises compounded by the pandemic.

I am happy to report that, for the first time in several years, ASM earned a royalty (\$21,228) in addition to the advance guaranteed (\$52,344) in our publishing agreement. This was largely the result of income from our rejoining the content aggregator BioOne in 2019 and makes total

journals revenue in 2020 comparable to the annual guaranteed royalties in our initial, five-year agreement with OUP. Traditional subscription income decreased from last year, but there was a corresponding increase in collection income, reflecting a trend of libraries migrating from traditional subscriptions to collection arrangements. Revenues from sales of our digital archives increased compared to 2019, and we saw a 45% rise in revenue from Open Access charges, although uptake remains very low.

**(2) Editorial Staff.** *JM* and *MS* are the most visible products of the ASM. Their success is a direct reflection of the efforts of the editorial teams of both journals, who comprise the bulk of the PAB. We excel through the dedication and efforts of these members, and they continue to display passion for mammalogy and for helping authors present their work as efficiently and effectively as possible. I also want to recognize the efforts of the team at OUP, especially Fiona McDonald, Sarah Wolper, Sarah Trostle, and Rebecca Dowdy, our new Journals Manager, who joined in mid-year to improve pre-print production efficiency.

The Associate Editors (AEs) interact the most with authors and reviewers and deserve the Society's thanks and recognition for their roles in maintaining the high standard of work in our journals. Seven AEs for *JM* and one AE for *MS* are stepping down from their posts in June: **Seth Eiseb (3 years), Mike Cherry (3 years), Jack Hopkins (4 years), Rochelle Constantine (5 years), Chris Pavey (9 years), Ricardo Ojeda (10 years), and Brad Swanson (11 years).** The Society thanks them all for their service to ASM, especially those who have served more than one three-year term. I am currently seeking replacements and will submit to the Board the names and qualifications of individuals nominated to fill these positions, with the aim of having a full complement of AEs approved by the Board in time to begin their new terms in July.

Meredith Hamilton continues to provide steady leadership as Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of *MS*. The number of species accounts published each year has remained fairly steady (12 to 16) over the past several years, while the number of pages published has increased. Moreover, the journal continues to be a major source of educational and natural history information for educators and the media, including March Mammal Madness.

I want to recognize members of the Nomenclature Committee, especially Ryan Norris, Al Gardner, and Associate Editors Ricardo Moratelli (*JM*) and Sergio Solari (*MS*), for their continued assistance with taxonomy issues that arise as part of our editorial process for both journals, and Sean Maher, Chair of the Informatics Committee, for his ongoing assistance with publications-related content on the ASM webpage. Lastly, I am grateful to Ginny Hayssen, who has already provided years of service to ASM publications, for her willingness to stay on for another year as Associate Editor for Language Coordination.

Luis Ruedas officially assumed EIC responsibilities for *JM* in 2020. Luis' tenure thus essentially began in COVID-19 pandemic era, and he was forced to manage increasing numbers of shutdown-driven submissions while continuing to work full-time (unrelieved) in his academic position at Portland State. Sadly, Luis informed me in December 2020 that he wished to step down as EIC, although he was willing to continue to work while I sought a new EIC. Earlier this month, the Board approved my nomination of Dr. Brett Riddle to succeed Luis, effective 1 July. Brett will work with Luis and OUP over the next two months so that he can take the reins

officially later this summer. On behalf of the PAB, I thank Luis for his commitment to *JM* and the Society during this very difficult period and wish him all the best and a much-deserved break.

Although the pandemic was a novel situation, the problems that Luis faced as new EIC revealed that the workload had become too heavy and unsustainable, especially given the trends of increasing number of manuscripts, greater complexity of production workflows, difficulties in recruiting reviewers, and author expectations for greater convenience and faster turnaround times. Some of these trends are apparent in our *JM* Publication Statistics below and are highlighted in blue text. Importantly, this workload makes it difficult to recruit new EICs, effectively limiting our hiring pool to retired or semi-retired, senior mammalogists who are financially stable and have sufficient time to devote to the journal's growing needs. Moreover, this pool does not yet match, neither demographically nor in technological capacity, our increasingly diverse and connected society.

With knowledge of the urgent need to relieve Luis, in January President Kelt formed an *ad hoc* committee consisting of former senior editors and me to explore ways to reduce the workload of the EIC, including changes to the editorial structure of *JM*. The committee met approximately weekly and by email. We reviewed the editorial structures of comparable journals, sought advice on appropriate compensation for editors, and reviewed the past editorial structure and publications budget of the Society. President Kelt notified the Board by email in March of the committee's unanimous recommendation to establish a new Managing Editor position for *JM*. **The proposed breakdown of responsibilities for the Managing Editor and EIC are attached below as an Appendix.** In addition, as a result of our review, the committee felt that the stipend given to the EIC of *MS* had remained too low for many years, was not commensurate with the level of responsibility and prestige of the post, and would be inadequate to recruit a new EIC effectively. The proposed stipend for the Managing Editor for *JM* and for an increase in the stipend for the *MS* EIC are included in my budget request at the end of this report. I will present the committee's deliberations and rationale for these recommendations at the Board meeting.

**(3) Editorial Policies and Procedures.** Given the dynamic nature of the academic publishing landscape, the PAB, and especially the EICs, deal with a wide range of editorial issues regularly. To provide consistent information to authors and editorial staff and avoid confusion, the EICs and I aim to update the *Instructions to Authors* for each journal once per year, shortly after the Annual Meeting, with changes to be adopted with the next volume. Senior editorial staff and OUP also met virtually this year to make changes to the journal's Style Guide, which are the detailed instructions that we give to the production and copyediting teams at OUP to guide their work. These will be implemented in the next few months.

Because of the pandemic, we were unable to hold our annual strategy meeting of the senior leadership and OUP. Beginning in 2021, Luis and I have met monthly via videoconference with Fiona, Sarah, and Rebecca to discuss *JM* matters. These meetings have been helpful and productive and will continue with our new editorial team.

Given the problems with the timely production of *JM* this year, we will continue to explore ways to improve communication, reduce errors, and increase efficiency. These include streamlining

and standardization of the article layout, re-thinking the display of content online, and revisiting our approach for providing commentary and invited articles. Our editorial assistant, Sarah Wolper, has implemented a checklist to alert authors at the time of submission if their manuscript is improperly formatted and return to them for corrections before assigning it for review. I will prepare training materials for AEs and reviewers in an effort to increase consistency across AEs in journal standards and level of editing, with the aim of reducing the copyediting load on the EIC.

**(4) Distribution, Availability, and Promotion of Publications.** ASM members and readers occasionally express frustration with our publications, including inaccessible and missing articles and Supplementary Materials, errors on proofs, billing, and confusion about accessing the journal pages. If members encounter any problems, please let me know immediately and I will try to remedy them as quickly as possible. Some technical problems are handled centrally at OUP or by outside vendors, and outside of the control of our immediate OUP contacts, so your patience is appreciated.

As with many aspects of the Society’s business, production and publication of *JM* and *MS* continue to be disrupted by the pandemic and the resulting global shutdowns and disruptions of supply chains. Although content has continued to be published online through Advance Access as soon as it is ready, production and delivery of *JM* issues have been consistently delayed over the past year, for a variety of reasons. I am working with OUP and our editorial team to get *JM* back on track for the second half of 2021.

As in the past, I am requesting funds to publish 30 print copies of the 13 issues of *Mammalian Species*, Volume 52, Accounts 987-999. Twenty-eight of these will be sent to archival libraries, and two will be available for purchase. The estimated cost of printing is \$400, which is the same as in last year’s budget.

**(5) Publication Statistics.** Publication statistics for the *Journal of Mammalogy* between 1 April 2020 and 1 April 2021.

**Composition of recent issues of *JM*:**

Issue	Feature Articles	Special Feature / Invited Articles / Obituaries	Book Reviews	Total Pages
<b>101.3</b>	20	2	0	295
<b>101.4</b>	27	2	0	295
<b>101.5</b>	19	0	0	212
<b>101.6</b>	24	7	2	356
<b>102.1</b>	26	2	1	365
<b>102.2</b>	22	2	0	302
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,825</b>

The publication target for *JM* is approximately 330 pages per issue (~2,000 pages per year). We published 1,158 pages in the four issues in 2020 and approximately 667 pages in two issues in

2021, for an average of 304 pages per issue. The total number of pages published has increased, on average, by ~74 pages per year (6%) since 2015.

***JM* handling and production times (Feature articles only in 101.3-102.1; n = 104):**

Issue	Avg Submission to Acceptance (days)	Acceptance to Publication (online/paper) <sup>a</sup> (days)	Total Time (online/ paper) <sup>a</sup> (days)
101.3	238	46/127	284/365
101.4	220	47/168	267/ 389
101.5	201	50/186	252/ 387
101.6	250	76/ 156	327/ 406
102.1	257	103/ 174	360/ 430
102.2	-	-	-
<b>AVG</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>65/ 162</b>	<b>298/ 396</b>
<b>2020-21 (n = 91)</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>50/ 144</b>	<b>264/ 357</b>

<sup>a</sup>Time to publishing online/print in paper

Statistics were not available for the April 2021 issue (102.2). For all metrics, manuscript handling and production times for *JM* Feature articles were slower in 2020-21 than at any time during the past 6 years. None of the recent issues printed or were shipped on time and there were widespread delays in postal deliveries. These problems were caused by multiple factors: increased numbers of submissions and workload for editorial staff, errors and poor communication by the overseas pre-print compiler, editorial decisions, and, especially, the direct and indirect effects of the global pandemic on all aspects of review, editing, and production workflows. We also need to improve consistency across AEs in the quality of manuscripts delivered to the EIC, which will require better training. Improving all aspects of operations of *JM* is the top priority for the remainder of the year and into 2022. However, these may also reflect longer-term trends: time from submission to acceptance (which is under our editorial control) and time from acceptance to online publication (a combination of EIC and OUP efforts) have both increased by an average of 7% per year since 2015.

**Geographic distribution of submitting authors of all manuscripts accepted for publication between 1 April 2020 and 1 April 2021; n =154 manuscripts with decisions:**

Location	Submitting Author (%)
U.S.	59 (38.3)
Canada	10 (6.5)
Latin America	45 (29.2)
Europe	19 (12.3)
Oceania	5 (3.3)
Asia	9 (5.8)
Africa	7 (4.6)

*JM* corresponding authors came from 25 countries on all continents except Antarctica. Represented countries, besides the U.S. and Canada: Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay); Europe (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Romania, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, U.K.); Oceania (Australia); Asia (China, Philippines); Africa (South Africa, Tanzania).

The percentage of published papers submitted by U.S. researchers dropped to its lowest level (38%) in recent memory, underscoring the increasingly international scope of the journal. *JM* continues to receive high numbers of manuscripts from authors outside the U.S. (70% of 284 decided manuscripts from 41 countries; 66% of 422 submitted manuscripts, representing 46 countries), especially Latin America, although rejection rates tend to be higher for decided manuscripts from outside the U.S. (52%) than for those with a U.S. corresponding author (31%), possibly reflecting challenges for authors whose first language might not be English. These authors are encouraged to take advantage of ASM’s Buddy System, which is coordinated by Ginny Hayssen.

**Manuscripts (*JM* Feature Articles only) submitted, accepted, and rejected between 1 April 2020 and 1 April 2021, including comparable data for 3 preceding years:**

Category	2020-21	2019-20*	2018-19	2017-18
<b>Number of manuscripts handled</b>	422	392	359	261
<b>Number of manuscripts accepted/provisionally accepted (a)</b>	154	154	87	65
<b>Number of manuscripts rejected (r)</b>	130	162	141	105
<b>Pending decisions (still in review)</b>	138	76	131	91
<b>Rejection rate <math>[r/(a+r)]</math> %</b>	46	51	62	62
<b>Total Final Decisions (a + r)</b>	284	316	228	170

\*Excludes the Special Centennial Issue Volume 100.3

The total number of manuscripts handled has increased, on average, by 5% each year since 2015. Meanwhile, the rejection rate has dropped from a high of 72% in 2017 to 46% in the past year, which contributes to the number of manuscripts handled by the EIC. The number of manuscripts from the past year that did not have a final decision by 1 April (“pending”) has increased by ~24% per year.

**Annual publication statistics for *Mammalian Species* in 2020, including comparable data for 3 preceding years:**

Statistic	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>Number of accounts published</b>	13	16	15	14
<b>Pages published</b>	172	162	169	127
<b>Accounts in proof</b>	2	2	3	4
<b>Accounts with Editor-in-Chief</b>	17 <sup>a</sup>	14	26	32
<b>Accounts with Associate Editors</b>	13 <sup>b</sup>	18	35	32
<b>New accounts submitted and assigned to Associate Editors</b>	11	13	17	15

<b>New accounts assigned to authors</b>	25	22	14	34
<b>Total number of accounts in preparation</b>	148 <sup>c</sup>	233	257	290

<sup>a</sup>Five inactive; <sup>b</sup>Six inactive; <sup>c</sup>45 overdue

**(6) Action Items (requested changes from 2021 budget):**

- (a) Increase the annual stipend for the Editor-in-Chief for *Mammalian Species* from \$6,000 to \$10,000,
- (b) Establish an annual stipend of \$20,000 for a new Managing Editor position for the *Journal of Mammalogy*,
- (c) Increase the number of ASM-paid page charges from 20 (\$400) to 32 pages (\$640) to allow the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Mammalogy* to author or solicit more invited or commissioned articles,
- (d) Reduce the number of Associated Editor honoraria from 28 to 26 for the *Journal of Mammalogy*, and from 7 to 6 for *Mammalian Species*, a savings of \$1,500 annually,
- (e) Reduce the amount of funds available in the Hardship Publishing Grants program from \$10,000 to \$8,000, and eliminate color print allowances for Editor's Choice commentary articles, a combined savings of \$4,850.

Considering budget items that did not change and combining all these requests, the proposed 2022 PAB budget is \$13,390 higher than that approved for 2021.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
Paul Stapp  
ASM Publications Director  
[pstapp@fullerton.edu](mailto:pstapp@fullerton.edu)

APPENDIX: Proposed change to responsibilities of EIC of the *Journal of Mammalogy* by addition of a Managing Editor

**Responsibilities of Managing Editor (ME)**

- 1) Receives properly formatted manuscripts from Editorial Assistant via S1\*
- 2) Makes initial decision on manuscripts (desk reject, reject and send to Buddy System, assign to AE, or recommend immediate accept or Fast Track to EIC)\*
- 3) Assigns manuscripts to AEs via S1\*
- 4) Monitors and manages AE workloads and timeliness\* and provides quarterly reports to Publications Director (PD)
- 5) Works with Editorial Assistant to ensure S1 template letters are appropriate
- 6) Works with PD and EIC to ensure suitable mix of AEs based on topics
- 7) Works with OUP to update Author Instructions online and advice to reviewers
- 8) Checks manuscripts provisionally accepted by AEs, sends to EIC via S1 or back to AEs if additional work is needed, and assists EIC with final editing if needed
- 9) Compiles and edits materials for Society business published in front- and back-matter\*
- 10) Attends annual OUP Strategy meeting (OUP funded)
- 11) Represents a potential trainee to replace EIC and as backup if needed

\*formerly done by EIC

**Responsibilities of Editor-in-Chief (revised)**

- 1) Responsible for all content in *JM*
- 2) Edits all manuscripts to be published
- 3) Reviews and, if necessary, edits proofs
- 4) Makes final decisions on all manuscripts undergoing review
- 5) Has ultimate responsibility for the timely production of *JM* and meeting OUP's production schedule
- 6) Selects Editor's Choice articles for each issue
- 7) Solicits high-profile, timely Perspectives papers or special features; writes commentary articles (if desired)
- 8) Reviews Obituary manuscripts and works with PD and ASM Historians to identify authors and select at least one external reviewer
- 9) Coordinates Special Features with Special Feature Editor
- 10) Resolves disputes between authors, AEs, and reviewers
- 11) Works with the ME and AEs to identify articles likely to be of high interest and promote to ASM website and OUP
- 12) Works with the PD and ME to ensure suitable mix of AEs based on topics
- 13) Works with the PD to make changes to *Journal* style, format and policy
- 14) Provides information on *JM* to the PD for the Annual Report of the PAB
- 15) Selects manuscripts and determines Issue Running Order
- 16) Solicits and selects cover images
- 17) Works with Editorial Assistant to transmit manuscripts to OUP Production ("handshake") and resolve problems
- 18) Attends annual ASM Board of Directors meeting and OUP Strategy meetings (latter is OUP funded)

## Proposed Pre-production Workflow:

