

Editorial

Marine animals – they come in all shapes and sizes



While wrapping up the third volume of JMATE, we continue to strive toward improving the journal's capability to serve the global marine animal

community. This has led us to launch the occasional 'special issue' of JMATE. For example, the current issue is dedicated to non-mammalian marine species. After all, some might argue that they are sentinel species, alerting us to problems before they appear at the mammalian level. The ecology of the oceans must be viewed in its totality if we want to understand the issues facing us in the next decade.

The current issue of JMATE has articles that provide useful information on: (1) the use of scuba diving photography for the advancement of knowledge on external fish parasites near the Turkish coastline, (2) body dimensions and distribution of crabs in a very sensitive local area in northern Israel and (3) the effects of time on the distribution and outcome of birds collected during the Deepwater Horizon gulf oil spill compared to the Exxon Valdez spill. It is hoped that these articles will stimulate further thought on wide ranging issues related to marine animals and their ecology. Often by bridging a variety of specializations, cross fertilization of ideas and techniques can occur that might otherwise not. More and more research is pigeonholed into narrower areas, based on specific species (dolphin research) or technology (gene work), with individual researchers becoming less and less aware of the 'larger picture'. Therefore editors often wrestle with whether it is best to have diversity within an individual journal issue or gather specific articles into focused 'special' journal issues. While focused special issues are desirable for the reader, significant delays can be incurred in the release of these issues. Time is needed for submissions on the focused topic to come into the

journal and undergo the review process. There is also great variability in the manuscript submission volume, depending on the topic selected and willingness of authors to submit matching manuscripts on selected subjects. Ultimately a combination of both would most likely best meet the needs of all.

It was fortunate that the manuscripts included in this issue arrived in such a way that this focused issue was made possible. In future, ideally, an advanced callout to the community for specific focused articles will allow for more preplanning and timely publication. That said, please note that future special issues are planned so if you have something that you have been wanting to get published to share with the rest of the community please send it along and if there are ideas on focus issue topics please let us know by sending an email to me at editor@oers.ca

As this is our final issue for 2010, the editorial team would like to thank all our reviewers and contributors for ensuring that JMATE continues to grow and establish itself. There is no doubt the papers that are ultimately published in JMATE all benefit from not only the internal review they receive but the external peer review as well. All of us on the editorial staff are enormously grateful for reviewer's time and effort in providing positive and useful feedback on manuscripts sent to them.

Best wishes for 2011, and please consider JMATE as a venue to get your data and information out there for all to read!!

Dr Carin Wittnich
Editor-in-Chief, JMATE