

EDITORIAL

Getting launched is only half the battle



Well a year has come and gone and I am reminded of the old saying "the best laid plans of mice and men"! By that I am referring to our Editorial Board's grand aspirations on running quarterly issues with the good old 3 week turn-around time for manuscript appraisals. Yup that was the goal alright but that was not exactly what happened. Let's dissect the events in order of impact.

First of all we as the journal cannot control the timing of the submissions. If it is a busy time of year for all marine mammal folks then submission of articles is not on the forefront of everyone's mind. There is the external review process which we dearly want to include as it adds a certain level of scrutiny and excellence to the work we will ultimately publish. Also this sort of peer feedback only serves to enhance the manuscripts and what author would not want that! That said we then rely on the kindness of the experts we approach to provide a review of these papers at their convenience. This normally goes well but again if the time of year is not good for the expert or they cannot do the review then we have to try others, all of which take time and a lot of it. Relinquishing that aspect of the review process leaves review by our editorial staff, and this can miss key important issues in the field that only an expert would be aware of. So we are torn between providing our authors the best feedback and take a lot longer than originally strived for or compromise and do an in-house review that is much faster. Ultimately it is hoped with everyone's help and patience we can create a core group of external reviewers that get to know JMATE and can when called upon provide a rapid review turn-around. I think it has become clear that this will take more time than we had originally anticipated. I certainly would like to hear how the readership and future authors feel about this and what they feel would be the best approach.

Then it has to be pointed out that since this is an all access e-journal without subscription rates, all our staff, board etc are volunteer. Translated this means that all these great folks have salaried full-time jobs and personal lives, both of which take precedence over their volunteer effort. Understandable but it can make for some difficulties for our fledgling journal trying to make a go of it and not let down its authors and readership. Though thankfully this next issue is out, I must take a moment to express my thanks to those external reviewers who were there for us and most especially Mike Belanger, the JMATE Associate Editor, who took it upon himself to single-handedly read and verify every paper to help me get this out. Also again to Danny Quaglietta for all his quick formatting and web work.

So for those of you who have had to endure the lengthy process of article turnaround and for the slower publication rates I do extend our apologies. Thank-you for all your help, patience and understanding. Please hang in there with us be-

cause without you there is no reason for us to exist. Any help you can offer - be it suggestions from those with experience, or volunteering to review for us would be most welcome and of course we cannot pay but hope you would take us up on our offer to publish with us!

In any case, we are determined to succeed and look forward to fixing these difficulties. In doing so, in the future, JMATE hopes to establish itself as a reasonably timed turn-around and an interesting, useful source of information for the marine mammal world, whether it be scientists, trainers, veterinarians or just folks with a deep interest in these great creatures.

Dr Carin Wittnich
Editor-in-Chief, JMATE



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We invite your thoughts comments and ideas on either articles in previous issues or others related to marine animals that you may have. Looking forward to hearing from you!

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