

## Editorial

### Welcome to the Reintroduction of *North American Fauna*!

I am pleased to announce the resurrection of the monograph series *North American Fauna* from a prolonged period of dormancy. This monograph series has a long history; it was first published in 1889 (Merriam 1889). To put this in perspective, in 1889 Benjamin Harrison was president and North and South Dakota had just become states. *North American Fauna* was first published by the Division of Ornithology and Mammalogy within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Subsequent issues have been published by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Accordingly, this series likely holds the record for surviving more governmental reorganizations than almost any publication in history. The persistence of this monograph series proves that good science can survive in spite of government bureaucracy. That is, you can change the letterhead as many times as you like, but the point of the letter is still valid.

While *North American Fauna* has survived, no issues of this monograph series have been published since 1991. It is not clear to me why this series was suspended; I have not seen anything written that would imply that the intent was to cease the publication of this series. Rather it seems that in one of the numerous reorganizations, the process for continuing this series was lost. Thanks to the hard work of many folks, this oversight has now been corrected.

In the preface to the first issue (Merriam 1889), there is an announcement that introduces the new series titled *North American Fauna*. This announcement describes the goals and the purpose of the work being conducted by the Division of Ornithology and Mammalogy and then notes “In the progress of the work many new facts are obtained which ought to be put on record for the benefit of other workers in this department of science.” I think this statement still stands true today. While the mission, goals, and the purpose of the various government and state agencies continually evolve, and the types of research questions have certainly changed, biologists still have an obligation to put our data on record for the benefit of others. The goal of *North American Fauna* has always been to provide such an outlet. This process is one of the fundamental tenets allowing science to advance.

On the cover of many of the historic issues of *North American Fauna* there is a statement that reads:

The North American Fauna series includes original monographs of scientific investigations

relating to North American vertebrates, invertebrates, and plants including descriptions of groups of taxa, ecosystems, or complex interactions among species and basic research on species life history, distribution, population dynamics and taxonomy.

This statement may lead some to ask: What makes *North American Fauna* different from any of the monograph series that are published by various organizations? What makes this monograph unique is that there is no requirement that articles appeal to a broad general audience, be perceived as being novel, or have a high scientific impact. That is, within the confines of the work environment, many agency personnel are constrained to focus on fairly narrow topics or specific management problems. The resulting products may be fundamentally sound, but may not be publishable in common commercial outlets because the topic or presentation is not sufficiently broad to appeal to a wide journal audience. Case in point, in the introduction of the first issue, Dr. C.H. Merriam (1889) states: “The present revision of the groups is by no means exhaustive—it is intended merely as a foundation for further study.” The publication of these more narrowly focused manuscripts may facilitate subsequent broad scale synthesis across taxa or geographic areas and thereby allow inference at larger scales.

*North American Fauna* has a mission of publishing monograph-length manuscripts that focus on a specific topic or issue in management or conservation. *North American Fauna* will also consider manuscripts describing significant portions of a species life history as these data apply to development of population models. Further, *North American Fauna* will consider manuscripts describing groups of taxa, ecosystems, or complex interactions among species. These manuscripts must be of sufficient detail to be considered as the authoritative publication on the issue or species covered.

*North American Fauna* is being re-launched as a journal in the public domain; it is free and readily accessible. In addition, all previously published issues have been digitized and are now available online (<http://www.fwspubs.org>) in a format that allows searching within PDFs, forward linking, and streamlined searching and retrieval, whether a user searches inside the website or uses a search engine such as Google™.

*North American Fauna* will utilize a system of a single Editor-in-Chief and a network of subject editors. Each manuscript will receive a minimum of two peer reviews as well as a review by a knowledgeable subject editor. Subject editors will correspond directly with authors throughout the review process



and will provide both an assessment of the manuscript as well as the peer reviews. Thus, authors can be confident that their manuscripts will receive rigorous peer review and that these reviews will be interpreted by experts in the subject area. Anyone interested in finding out more about *North American Fauna* or the process for submitting a manuscript can visit the website <http://www.fws.gov/science/publicationsys.html>.

Throughout this process of getting *North American Fauna* back up and running, I have been struck with two conflicting feelings. On the one hand, it feels like we are starting something completely new; on the other, it is clear we are continuing something very old. It's apparent that the first upcoming issue of the

new online version will look and feel much different than the first issue when it was released in 1889. Perhaps this is just another example of evolution in progress. I look forward to working with authors in continuing both the legacy and the evolution of this monograph series.

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## Reference

Merriam CH. 1889. Revision of the North American pocket mice. *North American Fauna*. 1:1–29. doi: 10.3996/nafa.1.0001

