

Editorial

WORDS FROM THE EDITOR—

With the completion of this issue, we have successfully published our second volume. Our mission is further set, and I think it easy to visualize our intended mission, based on the observation of each new issue. *Amphibian and Reptile Conservation* (ARC) now numbers over 700+ subscribers and has printed and distributed 3,000 copies each of both issues 2 and 3, thus making ARC the largest distributed, English language, herpetological scientific journal in the world. I view my role with the journal as “carrying the torch” as editor and publisher, while many interested in assisting the journal have come “on board” as advisors or editors, special section editors, contributors, in-country liaisons, and in other ways. I am grateful for all of this assistance, and would like to invite others with a special interest or talent to contact me for more information and discussion. I am always open to feedback, new input, and ideas regarding the journal and/or the conservation of amphibians and reptiles worldwide, as well as all life. Again, I invite all to participate in what I feel is one of the most important concerns for all herpetologists, not just ones doing conservation related work. Now I would like to briefly outline our progress thus far.

The idea for a journal devoted strictly to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles evolved after I sadly left a brief stint at dental school in 1991, much too early to ever practice. Though it was a rather down time for me then (and not the last hurdle I would have to overcome), I found that it would be several more years before I would determine what my life’s work could be. After spending about three years doing a lot of bookwork in the libraries of primarily Utah after leaving dental school, I met a publisher, zoologist, and a former classmate of mine [in my first graduate level class as a student at Brigham Young University (BYU)], Jay Vilhena. It was he that most directed my interest in herpetology into something more concrete and credit should be kindly given. On a long road trip to New Mexico, to deliver a computer system, I told Jay I needed help with focusing my ideas of writing, research, conservation, and herpetology. After a long and contemplated discussion, as well as his background as a long-time friend and associate, Jay announced, that I should publish a newsletter devoted to my interests. This was 1994. After much thought, more time, and finally, some strong persuasions of a spiritual nature, I agreed to undertake the task. Eventually, I progressed the idea from a newsletter, to a scientific journal, to lastly, what I now refer to as a magazine styled, scientific journal. In October of 1996 we published our first modest journal. Fifteen hundred copies of the first issue



Helping right a wrong Our first day filming a documentary at Hetch Hetchy reservoir (background) and holding one of our extras, a bullsnake *Pituophis melanoleucus*, which wandered across our trail. Reference: www.hetchhetchy.org

proved to be far too few as we quickly ran out of stock in about February of 1997, as we continued to have a strong interest in the journal. After a move to the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona from my alma mater of BYU in Provo, Utah, in the late fall of 1997 as the first snow began to fall in Provo, the journal and myself were exposed to a new and exciting landscape. Work on the journal was agonizingly slow, but I continued to persevere and make some progress. To help move the journal forward, I again packed up and moved to my hometown of Modesto, California in the late summer of 1999, to be closer to my family and their influence. At each step of the way, throughout the years, I continued in good faith to steadily work and make needed associations to further the work on the journal, though not all of these associations were fruitful. I have left out many of the gory details for lack of space here, and/or left to some future conference gathering (informally), I can attest to the fact that it hasn’t been an easy path to follow with many uncertainties and setbacks. One certainty is my unwavering commitment to continue forward regardless of what must be overcome along the way. Further, as conservation biologist Michael Soule so accurately stated by telling me in a telephone conversation, it “takes a lot of gumption” to start a journal as I have done, and I would add, even more to continue in the face of adversity and uncertainty. However, with all struggles and tribulations comes moments of great joy and satisfaction for those who continue on. With the continued publication of this journal I invite all to share in our success. It is my rock solid, determined, and solemn devotion to continue on with the idea that there should be a journal accessible by as many people as possible, devoted to the conservation and preservation of amphibians and reptiles, and their habitats worldwide. Words of my favorite musical artist, whom I had the pleasure to meet just before I left Tucson, comes to mind as he eloquently sang in the album, *Late for the Sky*, and what I truly feel about my mission with the journal: “Keep a fire burn’n in your eye... Don’t let the uncertainty turn you around... Go ahead and throw some seeds of your own and somewhere between the time you arrive and the time you go, may lie a reason you were alive.” (Jackson Browne 1974, select lines from the song, *For a Dancer*). It is with the publication of this issue that we gain momentum in contributing to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles worldwide.

Craig Hassapakis
Founder, Editor, and Publisher

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