

PROLOGUE

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Editorial Comment

In this first issue of Volume 2 of *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* we continue to broaden our coverage of turtle biology and conservation. Reflecting that increase in scope, we have changed our subtitle to *International Journal of Turtle and Tortoise Research*. We retain our roots as the journal of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, but now intend that our journal will become as much an outlet for marine turtle work as for tortoise and freshwater turtle studies. Most chelonian researchers, regardless of their particular taxonomic focus, share certain common concerns, approaches, and potential solutions to the sometimes overwhelming threats facing all chelonian populations. A common forum for reporting and discussing biological data and conservation concerns can only help bring our efforts into focus as we learn from each other and use the data of other researchers to help us further investigate our own particular areas of expertise and concern. By providing this journal as an outlet for the publication of broad-based chelonian data, we hope to help redevelop the lines of communication between the increasingly disparate subspecialist groups working on marine turtles, freshwater turtles, and tortoises.

This issue is the largest to date, a reflection of our commitment to the goal of minimizing publication lag-time for authors. To that end, we will not only expand the content of issues as necessary, but may also increase our production schedule and publish more than two issues per year. Our rate of manuscript submissions has been increasing steadily: 15 in 1993, 42 in 1994, and 61 in 1995, with 45% on freshwater turtles, 28% on marine turtles, 21% on tortoises, and 6% on broader topics. Authors represent an international spectrum of contributors from 30 nations with 64% from the US. We have made a special effort to work closely with our reviewers and authors to revise manuscripts as necessary, and have kept our rejection rate at a low 12%. Subscriptions to the journal have risen steadily, currently at about 800, with a total distribution per issue of over 1000, representing 52 nations with 68% in the US. We are gratified by the continuing support of our readers and contributors, and plan on continuing and expanding our services as the journal grows.

A new addition to this issue is a short section on turtle poetry. Our desire is to share with our readers the beauty and wonder of turtles as expressed through the art of the poem. A selected poem will be published per issue, representing either reprinted previously published poetry or new material submitted specifically for this section. We encourage our readers to submit poetry for consideration, either their own material or previously published work by other authors. Turtles need not be the main focus of the poem, but should represent more than just a passing mention. In the sense that the relationship between man and turtles is multifaceted, so too is turtle poetry. The poems we publish here will reflect that complexity, from poems of pure admiration for the creatures themselves to others reflecting the utilization of turtles and their products. Some poems will reflect man's use of the turtle for sustenance, others will stress man's need to preserve and protect turtles. Some will treat turtles lightheartedly or with seeming disrespect, but all will hopefully help us to better understand both

the human and the chelonian condition, and remind us that the turtle holds a sacred place in all our hearts.

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