

# PROLOGUE

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## Editorial Comment

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Where were you on September 11? What were you doing when the news hit? How did you react and how did you feel? How did seeing the effects of the terrorist attacks on that deadly day affect you, your emotions, and your life? How did those inhuman and horrible attacks on the symbols of the free world and its people affect each of us? How did they affect our narrowly focused and specialized world of turtle conservation and biology? What can we take away from this cataclysmic encounter, how can we emerge with renewed strength and, ultimately, renewed hope?

I shall always remember that day. I had arisen early, before six in the morning, to work upstairs on the computer — I was in the middle of final formatting of this, the 13th issue of *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*, working hard trying to finish before the end of the month. After three hours of focused effort on the manuscript by Doody et al. on *Carettochelys*, I finished final editing and layout of their paper at around quarter of nine in the morning, and walked to the window of my study to look out. It was one of those spectacular September New England mornings — intense blue sky, warm, not too hot or cold, foliage still green with only a hint of fall colors beginning to appear, the sun glittering in the pond below my window, the fields, woods, and hills in the distance alive with promise and peace. It was a good day, and a good time to take a short break from the work at hand. My thoughts turned to diversion and golf and the enjoyment of a quick round on the nine-hole course down the street. The decision to play for a while before returning to the work of producing the journal was easy and I headed out the door with anticipation and without major concerns.

I enjoyed the next couple of hours of quiet and relaxation on the golf course, with no disturbances, relishing being outdoors in the sun and fresh air, not having to think about anything except how to hit the next shot and then trying to accomplish what I could see in my mind (though not usually successful in recreating that perfect visual image). I walked off the course around eleven o'clock and drove home. I had no idea that during my two hours of golf, the world had changed forever and terror had invaded our land. Nobody was around to tell me the news, nobody ran onto the golf course to announce we had been attacked. No doubt people in the club house were glued to TV sets, but I headed straight to the car and drove home without seeing anyone.

I walked into my home and saw a new message on the answering machine and picked it up. It was a message from my love, working in Boston, telling me the World Trade Center and Pentagon had been hit by terrorists in planes and

please call her to let her know I was safe. Stunned, I sat down and turned on the TV, not knowing what to expect. The unspeakable terror unfolded in front of my eyes. Before barely understanding what was happening I saw footage of the second plane hitting the South Tower, and then the tower collapsing in a violent cataclysm reminiscent of volcanic destruction or a science fiction attack from outer space. I was overwhelmed and frozen to the spot — how could this be happening, how could man do this to man? Where was the justice, where was the celebration of life and diversity I had always cherished? How could anyone hate enough to perpetrate such terrible destruction? What incomprehensible terror was being felt by the innocent victims in that overwhelming inferno of fire, smoke, and collapsing steel?

For the next few weeks it became hard to function in the daily routine of life. Focusing on anything but the terrorist attacks became difficult. Slowly, with time, the emotions changed. First there was disbelief and shock, then profound sadness and a sense of vulnerability and empathy for those most directly affected. It was a time of reaching out to family and loved ones, of reaffirming the closest ties and making sure they were intact. Eventually, mixed emotions of fear and anger and the need for a measured response struggled with underlying feelings of man's brotherhood with man in trying to sort out how to feel about responding to the threat.

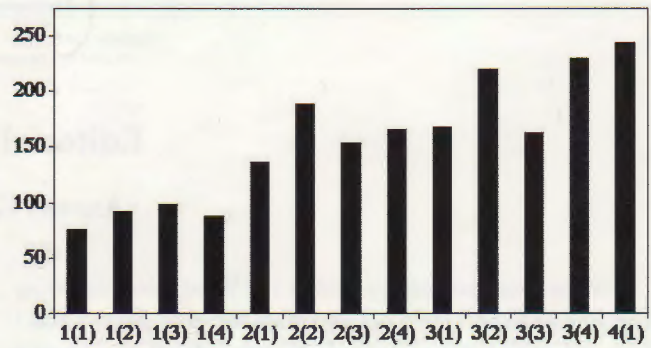
The brutality of the loss of so many innocent lives helped most of the civilized world cry out in anguish and solidarity against this new pestilence in our world. Nations of all faiths and political tendencies began to come together to denounce and pledge support for a global war on terrorism. And so it must be. The planet we all share is too small and vulnerable to allow the scourge of terrorism to destroy the diversity and civilization that has evolved here. We are a planet of diverse cultures, peoples, and religions, and just as we seek to preserve the biological diversity of our planet, including all species of turtles and their habitats, we must seek to preserve the cultural diversity found here. The terrorists who attacked seek to destroy the cultural diversity of the rest of the world in favor of their own narrow and parochial beliefs. They must not be allowed to succeed, and if their zealotry is so profound as to be unable to co-exist with respect for other cultures, then they must be destroyed, as we have sought to defeat other threats to the diversity of our world. We must learn to celebrate the differences between peoples, as we have learned to celebrate the differences in the global diversity of life. Those who seek to destroy the diversity of the world, whether cultural or biological, must not be allowed to succeed.

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Life since September 11 has slowly returned to normal and I've been able to begin to refocus on turtles and their troubles. Initiatives are proceeding on several fronts. The CITES technical workshop on Asian Turtle Trade scheduled for November in Indonesia has been rescheduled for January with hopes that we can together begin to solve the problem of that overwhelming trade. The fledgling IUCN Turtle Survival Alliance formed earlier this year has grown and matured under its able leadership, building turtle conservation bridges between zoos, herpetoculturists, law enforcement agencies, and other partners. More information on these ventures will appear in our *Turtle and Tortoise Newsletter*.

We have continued our efforts to make *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* a professional and valuable publication outlet. The graph presented here shows the gradual increase in content of each issue produced, starting at under 100 pp per issue, with this issue being the largest yet at 244 pp. As more manuscripts have been submitted we have responded by increasing the number of pages published. We will continue to try to keep up with the flow of papers submitted for publication as we respond to the needs of our chelonian community.

Finally, I need to acknowledge and thank the 128 reviewers and editorial board members listed below who have helped provide peer review for all the manuscripts submitted over the



Number of pages published per issue of *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*.

last few years during the production of Volume 3 of *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*. Without their professionalism, dedication, and willingness to provide insightful reviews, I could not have hoped for the journal to have reached the academic standards of excellence to which I had aspired. With their help, those standards of excellence have been met and we have together achieved a first-class professional journal of chelonian studies. Among all of them, my co-editor, Peter Pritchard, deserves special thanks for helping me to review every single manuscript and providing a much-needed broad-based perspective on the importance and scope of the work submitted for publication. I thank you all for your ongoing support — I could not do this without you.

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