

## **Publications Committee of the Waterbird Society**

### 2013 Annual Report

#### **Membership:**

A committee comprised of Erica Nol (Chair; [enol@trentu.ca](mailto:enol@trentu.ca)), Clay Green ([claygreen@txstate.edu](mailto:claygreen@txstate.edu)), Brian Palestis ([bpalesti@wagner.edu](mailto:bpalesti@wagner.edu)), Joanna Burger ([Burger@biology.rutgers.edu](mailto:Burger@biology.rutgers.edu)), and Stephanie Jones ([editor.waterbirds@gmail.com](mailto:editor.waterbirds@gmail.com)) was convened.

#### **2012-2013 Committee Activities:**

This year the publications committee was involved with the transition to a new Editor of Waterbirds. We welcomed Stephanie Jones as Editor for the 2013 (and beyond) issues of the journal, of which two have been produced, at time of this report, on time. Stephanie has decided to use an electronic but not automated system of manuscript submission, as did her predecessor. The primary responsibility of the committee this year was to function as a sound board for Stephanie on numerous issues. For example, Stephanie had a question about the appropriateness of a paper on Brown-headed Cowbirds parasitizing Seaside Sparrows, for Waterbirds. This created some lively discussion and is now posted to Ornithology Exchange for general discussion of Council and Committee members. The Publications Committee was also involved with a decision about publication of an old Hochbaum article which was resolved satisfactorily as well as a discussion about a researcher's letter to the editor complaining that he was not cited in another paper published in Waterbirds. These issues were resolved. Stephanie has kept us informed of minor changes to the publication (as indicated below).

Christine Custer had indicated that a few changes needed to be made to the cover to acknowledge the new journal editor (which have been made) as well as changes in membership fees. Stephanie has also made some useful changes to the Information for Contributors. Stephanie is also making an effort to ensure that the Table of Contents has been received from Painter (our Publisher) as soon as it is complete and then sent to OSNA for posting to the general membership, in advance of the publication of the journal. Although Painter is agreeable to the practice the Table of Contents is not always received on time.

As an additional publicity activity Stephanie is working with Brian Palestis to post an 'Editor's Choice' to Ornithology Exchange (OE). The first of these should be posted on OE shortly.

As other journals are finding ways to publicize their findings (and the commercial presses have whole departments to work on communications), the publications committee has suggested to Stephanie that we could receive from authors' (after acceptance), 'lay summaries' that could then be distributed to the press. These would also help to highlight the main and most interesting findings from papers for inclusion in the 'Editor's Choice' on OE (see above).

We continue to liaise (through Brian Palestis) with BIOONE in designating featured articles on the BIOONE web site and other communication.

While talk of a Society for Ornithology has diminished, recent changes in the publication office and format of publication of both the Condor and the Auk mean that for now, a single journal office for all North American ornithological publications is not a well-supported model. Thus, there continues to be an important place for our independently published and well-respected journal. During the Association of Field Ornithologists' meeting in Florida, Gary Ritchson (Editor of JFO) and Stephanie Jones had many discussions about issues identified by the Society for Ornithology in relation to the smaller journals. There may be a joint meeting with the editor of the Wilson Journal of Ornithology next year at the joint AFO/Wilson meeting to discuss issues affecting the smaller journals.

**2013 Actions Approved by Council:**

Our duties for this year were to move forward the Publications Committee's activity with reference to the Strategic Plan of the WBs. I post below this section of the Strategic Plan here for information and I provide comments (in bold) below these.

**From Strategic Plan:**

*Journal and Publications*

Strengths:

The Society has enjoyed a steady increase in membership over the past decade, and the journal Waterbirds has improved its standing among the world's ornithological journals. This in part results from its international appeal and the fact that the Society has expanded its domain of interest to include shorebirds, waterfowl, and marsh birds. The Society has enjoyed a very strong relationship with the E.O. Painter Printing Company for more than 20 years, which has given the Society excellent value for its investment. The journal has also enjoyed an exceptional succession of accomplished and dedicated journal editors over the past 30 years. Most of these received little to no remuneration for their services. The Publications Committee has been active in pursuing new ideas to speed the process of publishing and has a strong track record in working closely with the Editor.

**Comment from Chair: Most, if not all of these comments still hold true. The impact factor of our journal for 2012 was 0.919, which is an increase from previous years (Table 1).**

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| Year | Impact Factor (IF) | Total Articles | Total Cites |
|------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 2012 | 0.919              | 64             | 882         |
| 2011 | 0.757              | 62             | 774         |

|      |       |     |     |
|------|-------|-----|-----|
| 2010 | 0.575 | 52  | 649 |
| 2009 | 0.476 | 48  | 504 |
| 2008 | 0.818 | 115 | 668 |

Weaknesses:

There are some concerns by Council for the ability of the Society to keep up with the current developing technology such as electronic submission or E-publishing.

Also, with the increase in the number of special issues of Waterbirds published in recent years, there is concern over the ability of the chief editor to keep up with the increased volume. At present, there is also limited opportunity for descriptive information on waterbirds from developing countries to find global outlets. This may perpetuate the threat to conserving avian diversity and wetland habitats in these countries.

**Comment: The limited opportunity for publishing waterbirds work from developing countries still appears to be an issue (See Editor's report for country breakdown). Contrary to concern about volume, the current Editor has expressed concern about the small number of submissions. We encourage all council members to submit papers to Waterbirds! We also suggest sending a blanket note to council members about the value of publishing in Waterbirds. The Publications Committee will draft the text for such an announcement.**

Threats:

The cost of contracting with a new press for electronic submissions may need careful evaluation. There is a range of services that different institutions provide and these can vary widely in costs.

**Comment: The current editor is managing with the non-automated manual submission system. Issues with using an automated system include:**

- 1) Not all systems are created equal: (e.g., Wiley is great but Allen Press is terrible).
- 2) We lose our relationship with Painter, as the automated systems are tied to publishers.
- 3) The costs seem to be about the same as using an assistant editor, depending on the costs and issues with using a new publisher.

**2013-2014 Proposed Work of the Committee:**

The publications committee will continue to communicate with the new editor about publication options and help with any issues that arise.

*Draft July 2013*

**Requests for Council Action:**

A decision about acceptable content of Waterbirds is requested to give guidance to our Editor. Similarly, the Editor of Marine Ornithology has requested shifting papers on true seabirds (e.g., penguins) submitted to Waterbirds to that journal, and in turn, that Editor would send papers on other waterbirds (e.g. waders, shorebirds) to Waterbirds. Guidance from Council is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Nol

Chair, Publications Committee, Waterbird Society