



## Introduction to *Ichthyology & Herpetology*

It is my honor to introduce the first issue of *Ichthyology & Herpetology*. While this is the inaugural issue of our journal under our new title, it is also the 109<sup>th</sup> volume of our continuously published journal focusing on the biology of amphibians, reptiles, and fishes. As many zoologists know, the publication of our journal preceded the formal creation of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH) by several years. The journal began as a newsletter that was first published on 27 December 1913 by our founder, J. Nichols. Nichols published the journal, at his own expense, with a concise mission statement: “published by the contributors to advance the study of cold-blooded vertebrates.” In the subsequent 100+ years, the journal’s mission remains unchanged. While the Society has encouraged and solicited research on an ever increasing breadth of topics over the last century, we have not similarly promoted diversity in our pool of authors, reviewers, and editors. Certainly, the number and range of authors and editors are larger now than for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the diversity of these scientists continues to lag behind society as a whole and our growth in the variety of scientific topics in our articles. In 2020, we finally recognized that this change needed to accelerate. In an effort to catalyze and formalize this commitment to a more diverse membership, pool of authors, and slate of editors, ASIH first had to recognize that our journal was named after a scientist who published racist and misogynistic articles. Then, we had to accept this reality, apologize for this and our other explicit actions and inactions that harmed or discouraged underrepresented ichthyologists and herpetologists, and begin to make corrections and amends for our past behaviors. As one of several steps toward a more inclusive Society, we needed to change the name of our journal such that it could advance the science of “cold-blooded vertebrates” without the historic bias or prejudice that its previous name embodied.

While there have been suggestions to change the name of the journal for a variety of reasons for several decades, the ultimate suggestion that the Society change the journal name began with the powerful voice of a concerned undergraduate biologist after class one day in the early 1990s. This student, (now Dr.) T. Wakefield, approached her college professor, A. Jaslow, and had an influential conversation with him about the racist writings of E. Cope after one of his lectures that discussed Cope’s research. As described in the interviews of Wakefield and Jaslow in an article in this issue by R. Parker, Jaslow was surprised to learn this, but he recognized immediately that Wakefield had taught him something important. Following the email from the ASIH Committee for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) on 5 June 2020 reinforcing the Society’s solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, Jaslow reached out to DEIB by email on 15 June 2020 about the racist writings of the ASIH journal’s namesake that Wakefield had shared with him many years ago. With this information, DEIB reached out to the President and Secretary of ASIH about the recommendation that ASIH rename its journal. This precip-

itated a series of discussions and virtual meetings culminating with the ASIH Executive Committee (EXEC) voting unanimously to change the name of the ASIH journal to *Ichthyology & Herpetology*. Following this vote, the ASIH Editor made the formal motion to the ASIH Board of Governors on 29 June 2020 to change the name of the journal, which was overwhelmingly supported, with the electronic vote closing on 2 July 2020. Following this vote, the journal editorial office, along with its publishing partners at Allen Press and BioOne, undertook the necessary steps associated with changing the name of the journal. At the same time, the ASIH President reached out (through S. Platania) to award-winning author J. Nichols II, grandson of the founder of the journal. On 22 October 2020, Nichols provided an essay on change (published as an introductory article in this issue) that represents his third formal interaction with ASIH and his family’s full commitment to changing the journal’s name. On 7 December 2020, the United States Library of Congress approved the name change and provided a provisional International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) for the renamed journal, formally recognizing that the ASIH journal will now be named *Ichthyology & Herpetology*, beginning with the first issue of 2021.

It is my hope that the new journal name and what it stands for will be a touchstone for this period of positive change in ASIH’s history. For several years, members and officers have been pushing ASIH to become a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable Society. Considerable work is still needed, but many people have and continue to be willing to make the necessary effort to improve our Society. I hope the previous and continued changes such as renaming the journal will encourage more people to join the Society and help push it forward socially and scientifically.

Changing the title of a journal sounds like a relatively simple concept, and, to some degree, it should be. However, it turns out that all of the mechanics required to formally change a name and all of the creativity associated with rebranding a journal takes a lot of work. As such, I want to take this opportunity to thank many people for their ideas, effort, commitment, and care. First, I want to thank T. Wakefield and A. Jaslow for their patience, perseverance, and for bringing this to the attention of DEIB and EXEC. Next, I want to thank every member of DEIB for their creativity, guidance, and leadership through the journal name change and for highlighting additional changes that the Society needs beyond the name change and their willingness to do a lot of that work. In particular, I want to highlight the new category of journal contributions that they developed—Scientist Spotlights—that provide modern and historical accounts of prominent scientists from underrepresented groups. The journal title change would not have been possible without the commitment, time, counsel, and passion of the 2020 EXEC. The rebranding of the journal involved many people, including our publication partners at Allen Press (led by A. Ulrich) and BioOne (led by A. Frankel), R. Pyle at ZooBank, D. Murphy and M. Gibbs for work on the

ASIH website, all of the Associate Editors, the Editorial Board, EXEC, and several invested scientists who offered their creativity or opinions: A. Bentley, M. Bernard, C. Brant, R. Dahl, R. Espinoza, F. McCormick, C. McMahan, J. Rowlett, J. Schmitter-Soto, D. Siegel, M. Tan, Y-K. Tea, B. Todd, S. Ward, and A. Zellmer. In particular, C. Chow and R. García-Roa provided highly influential cover-design suggestions that were critical in the final look and appearance of the 2021 branding of *Ichthyology & Herpetology*. The cover art for the first issue of *Ichthyology & Herpetology* was commissioned from Terrence Moline, African American Graphic Designers. He researched with K. Ford and myself and on his own to come up with this work to highlight ASIH's commitment to both biodiversity and human diversity. I am particularly indebted to a number of people who provided critical contributions or made themselves available at all times to ensure the timely and successful title change and inaugural issue of *Ichthyology & Herpetology*: M. Arce, C. Beachy, R. Bell, P. Chakrabarty, M. Davis, K. Evans, A. Flemming, K. Ford, M.

Franklin, S. Gibson, M. Girard, D. Hillis, J. Lomax, R. Martin, J. Nichols II, R. Parker, S. Platania, H. Plylar, L. Rocha, P. Skipwith, K. Smith, K. Tang, and W. Walkowski. With so many people helping with this endeavor, I am certain that I have inadvertently omitted people from this acknowledgment; I am sorry for any oversights.

Finally, I want to end by thanking the 119 current and former editors and the countless members of the editorial board, the reviewers, and, most importantly, the authors and Society members who made our journal's first 108 years a success. I thank you for your support, and I hope that the changes we are making will facilitate our goal of being the premier journal for research papers on the biology of amphibians, reptiles, and fishes.

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