



History of the publications of the American Society of Mammalogists

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Four series of publications have been produced in the 100-year history of the American Society of Mammalogist—*Journal of Mammalogy* [hereafter *Journal* or *JM*], *Monographs*, *Mammalian Species*, and the *Special Publication* series (Fig. 1—[Verts and Birney 1994](#)). The *Journal of Mammalogy* has been the flagship of the Society’s publications and as such, it is the only series to continue throughout its history. The first editor of the *Journal* was Ned Hollister, who had worked for the Biological Survey and U.S. National Museum before assuming the position of the Superintendent of National Zoological Park in 1916. Hollister served as the editor through volume 5, in November 1924, when he passed away. It was [Hollister \(1919:47–48\)](#) who articulated the objectives of the *Journal*:

“One of the principal objects of the Society is the publication of the *Journal of Mammalogy*. It is aimed to make this journal indispensable to all workers in every branch of mammalogy and of value to every person interested in mammals, be he systematist, paleontologist, anatomist, museum or zoological garden man, sportsman, big game hunter, or just plain naturalist. Toward this end, the help of each member and friend of the society is urged. General articles on mammals, recent and fossil, are solicited for publication, and authoritative papers on all branches of the study can be used. Papers of general interest on life-histories, distribution, and habits are particularly needed, in order that the *Journal* may not be overbalanced with purely technical matter.”

Hollister was followed by 23 other mammalogists who served as the editor of the *Journal*. Only one of the editors was a woman—Barbara H. Blake, who served as Journal Editor from 2002 to 2006. These primary editors have served under a variety of titles—Editor, Managing Editor, Journal Editor, and Editor-in-Chief. In 2013, the Society created the position of

Publications Director to address issues on the business management and overall direction of ASM publications. The changing titles for the primary editor reflected in part the makeup of the editorial staff of the *Journal*, with a single editor handling all duties until volume 38 in 1957. With this volume, the Board approved the appointment of Associate Editors, with four to six serving for each volume.

In 1967, with the start of volume 48, Associate Editors were eliminated, and the editorship was split into three editorial positions—Managing Editor, Editor for Feature Articles, and Editor for General Notes and Reviews. A separate Editor for Reviews was added as of volume 50, and with volume 54, an Associate Managing Editor was added to interface with Allen Press in Lawrence, Kansas. With a push to include more paid advertising in the *Journal*, an Advertising Editor was added with volume 57 in 1976. As the workload of manuscripts continued to increase, a Journal Editor position was created to receive the manuscripts with volume 60, and three Associate Editors handled the manuscript review process. The number of Associate Editors has increased over the years until by volume 100 in 2019 the number of Associate Editors reached 28. In 1993 (*JM* 74), a Production Editor was created, and in 1994 (*JM* 75), an Editor for Special Features was added.

Volume 1 of the *Journal* consisted of 5 numbers, no. 1 in 1919 and 2–5 in 1920, but thereafter appeared only quarterly until 2004 with volume 85, whereupon it was extended to six numbers per year. The *Journal* was first printed by the Williams & Wilkins Company (Baltimore, Maryland, which later changed its name to Waverly Inc.). It was the only firm to provide a bid for publishing the new journal in 1919, and Waverly continued to print the *Journal* through 1956. Beginning in 1957 (volume 38), the ASM and Allen Press developed a close working relationship. This lasted for 60 years (1957–2014) and evolved from Allen Press being the printer to being a publishing and business partner beginning in 2010. Allen Press originally just

JOURNAL OF MAMMALOGY

Published Quarterly by the American Society of Mammalogists

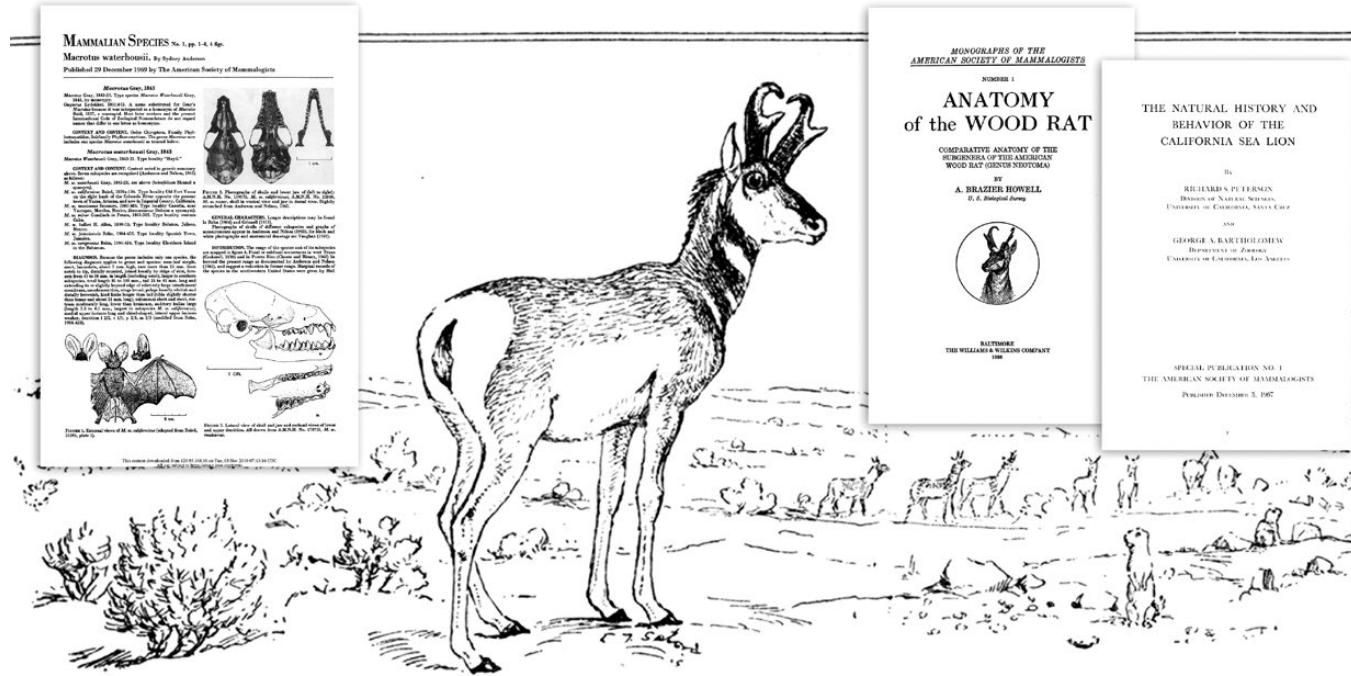


Fig. 1.—Collage of the first issues of the four different primary publications of the American Society of Mammalogists. First issue of the *Journal of Mammalogy* (vol. 1, no. 1) from 1919; the first issue of *Mammalian Species* from 1969; first issue of the *Monographs* series by A. Brazier Howell from 1926; first issue of the *Special Publication* series by Richard S. Peterson and George A. Bartholomew from 1967. Collage created by Ted Genoways.

printed and mailed the *Journal*, but over the years, the business relationship grew to their serving as copublisher and distributor of all of ASM's publications. In 2015, the Society contracted with Oxford University Press to publish and distribute both the *Journal* and *Mammalian Species*.

The first volume of the *Journal* to reach 1,000 pages was volume 56 in 1975, which just reached this number. The one constant design element of the cover has been the presence of an image of the pronghorn (Timm and McLaren 2019). Beginning with the first number of volume 73 in 1992, several major changes in format were instituted. The most obvious was a new cover design, including a central figure unique to each issue. The first image used was a drawing of a *Myotis lucifugus* in flight. The size of the *Journal* was increased to 8.5 inches by 11 inches and for the first time the text was set in a double column format. The larger format and double columns allowed for considerably more text to appear on a page and greater flexibility in placement of figures. These changes were followed subsequently by a number of other journals. The first color cover appeared in 1998 (*JM* 79(2)): a photograph of

an adult female saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*) captured in central Laos. In the 100 years of its existence, the *Journal* has published 84,210 pages.

The ASM has played an active leadership role among scientific organizations to make our science especially rigorous and broadly available. The *JM* requires that all papers published from research conducted in Latin America provide a translation of the abstract in the language of the country. For work in other non-English speaking countries, a foreign-language abstract is strongly encouraged. We provide a “buddy system” to help authors, especially students, who have good science to report but need assistance with communicating it in English. Experienced senior members volunteer to assist these authors in preparing their manuscripts.

Prior to the World Wide Web providing efficient distribution of scientific papers, perhaps one of the first large-scale efforts to provide free literature to students and scientists in developing countries occurred in the mid-1980s. Allen Press had amassed tens of thousands of issues of several journals it published at the time. The ASM was going to be charged 10 cents per issue

per year for the storage and insurance fees for the decades of journals stored in their warehouse, a remodeled Stokely-Van Camps pork and bean factory. A large-scale effort was undertaken by mammalogists and students to pack up sets of the *JM* and send them to libraries in developing countries.

With the advent of “online first” systematic papers, the *JM* needed a mechanism to secure the date of publication and an immutable description of new species. The editors, working closely with the ASM’s Nomenclature Committee, made *JM* one of the first vertebrate journals to establish and require that a Life Sciences Identifier Number (LSID; <http://zoobank.org>) be associated with all papers that included nomenclatural acts.

Certainly the most controversial paper published in the *Journal* was “Zoological subspecies of man at the Peace Table” written by Hall (1946) just at the end of World War II. The presentation of this paper at the 1946 Annual Meeting had drawn considerable criticism from returning veterans in the audience and its publication brought three letters of protest in the subsequent issue of the *Journal* (Hill 1947; Krogman 1947; Sicher 1947). John Eric Hill (*JM* 1947:87) probably best expressed the feeling within the Society:

This thesis seems to imply that one important cause of war is the living together of different kinds of peoples. Do barriers set up between people make for friendly relations? If that were so, the Balkan States with their fierce nationalism would have been a breeding-ground for peace!

On the contrary, historical experience indicates that segregation leads to strife. Barriers have been set up between different peoples frequently in the past, and even when the peoples differ in minor details, sometimes only in language, friction generally resulted. Hate flourishes best in an atmosphere of ignorance, where the stereotype, that warped idealized version of the other group, robbed of all humane characters, can be set up as a target.

The “I Slipped One Passed the Editor” award would definitely go to Dickerman (1960) for his paper on Davian behavior in the thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Ictidomys tridecemlineatus*). This behavior was not previously recognized in the scientific literature, but originated from a bawdy limerick: “There once was a hermit named Dave . . .”

In our opinion, one of the funniest papers to be published in the *Journal* appeared in the second volume when Dice (1921:38) described incidents disproving the erroneous ideas that “if a skunk be picked up by the tail he is powerless to discharge his scent; it is also believed by many people that if the fluid from the scent glands reaches the eye it will cause blindness.” It almost certainly was written in part “tongue and cheek,” although no doubt describes real events.

At the fourth annual meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists held 16–18 May 1922, at the American Museum of Natural History, the Board of Directors authorized the establishment of the J. A. Allen Memorial Fund. Hartley H. T. Jackson described the use of the Fund as follows in the minutes of the

meeting: “the income of which shall be used for the publication of certain numbers of the *Journal of Mammalogy* to be dedicated to the memory of Doctor Allen. Thus in creating this fund we shall not only honor this eminent and pioneer mammalogist, our first honorary member, and a man beloved by all who knew him, but we shall also make possible the publication of a number of the *Journal* about once every year from the proceeds of the fund” (*JM* 1922:199). Approximately \$10,000 [about \$145,000 in 2019 dollars] was contributed to the fund by friends, colleagues, and members of the Society. These were the initial funds now administered by the Trustees as part of the Society’s General Reserve Fund used to defray publication and other operating expenses. To continue to honor Dr. J. A. Allen, the lead article in each issue of the *Journal* is dedicated to his memory.

In June 2009, the *Journal* received an honor that had been nearly 100 years in development. As part of the official commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the *Journal of Mammalogy* was identified as one of the 100 most influential serials in Biology and Medicine over the last century. The pool from which the 100 publications were selected included three major categories—1) natural history, 2) clinical medicine and allied health sciences, and 3) molecular and cellular biology—considered by the 686 international members of the BioMedical and Life Sciences Division of the SLA (Leslie and Hamilton 2019; Timm and McLaren 2019).

The second publication series started by the ASM was the *Monographs*. The first of these book-length publications was by A. B. Howell covering the anatomy of the woodrat in 1926. In the following year, a natural history of the beaver appeared, by Warren (1927). The third monograph was a survey of the animal life of Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico by Bailey (1928). After producing three books in three years, no other *Monographs* were published. The answer to this probably lies with the stock market crash in 1929, then the Depression during the 1930s, World War II, and the veterans coming home and getting their education. It was the late 1950s and early 1960s when the desire for a book-length series reappeared, but the decision was made to allow the *Monographs* series to remain moribund.

At the 1964 Annual Meeting in Mexico City, the Board authorized the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee to plan and begin a new monographic series; each monograph would be known as a *Special Publication*. The stated purpose of the series was “to accommodate manuscripts, which are monographic in nature and too long to be published in the *Journal of Mammalogy*.” The *ad hoc* committee was chaired by William H. Burt and included J. Knox Jones, Jr., James N. Layne, and M. Raymond Lee. *Special Publication* No. 1 was published on 5 December 1967, entitled *The natural history and behavior of the California sea lion* (Peterson and Bartholomew 1967). Burt served as the editor of this first number in the series. Between this date and 21 February 2005, 12 additional special publications were produced.

These publications fell essentially into two groups—those that dealt with a single species and were written by single

authors or coauthors, and those that were large, edited volumes with multiple authors dealing with all aspects of the biology of a genus or family. The exceptions that did not exactly fit the pattern were—the multiauthored volume about the history of the first 75 years of the ASM and a single-authored treatment of “*The wild mammals of Montana*.” Seven mammalogists followed Burt as the Editor for Special Publications, planning and preparing the final manuscripts. Another eight served as Managing Editors for Special Publications dealing with the production of the volumes.

Collectively these volumes contained 4,718 pages of good science about mammals. However, as the 21st century dawned, it became increasingly clear that although mammalogists can make great books about mammals, we know nothing about the marketing of these wonderful products. The three publications on marine mammals, issued relatively early in the series, sold well for the Society, but most other numbers moved very slowly. The most popular of the *Special Publication* series, *The anatomy of the woodchuck*, was the all-time best seller. However, the Board wasn’t originally certain it should be published, confirming that we have much to learn about the publishing business. Facing the financial reality of this situation, the *Special Publication* series has been paused and will probably not return in its previous incarnation. Other ways of delivering similar information in a more cost-effective fashion, such as online publication, print-on-demand, or some yet to be created technology, need to be explored.

It was Sydney Anderson who willed the *Mammalian Species* series into existence. He initiated the original planning for the series, served as its first editor for 15 years (1968–1983), and then five more years as its Associate Editor (1983–1988). The aim was to have each species account be a concise summary of present knowledge of the biology of a species, including taxonomy, general characters, distribution, fossil record, form, function, behavior, ontogeny, ecology, genetics, and pertinent literature. Illustrations of the skull, a distribution map, and an image of the species were to be included when feasible. The first picture of the subject species was a black and white photograph of a white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) in 1972 (*MS* 8) and the first color photograph was used in the account for *Heterohyrax brucei* in 2000 (*MS* 645). In the beginning, Anderson handled all correspondence, solicitation of accounts, and even took subscriptions. He wrote and published the first *MS* account that appeared on 29 December 1969, which covered *Macrotus waterhousii* (Anderson 1969). The format that was set by Anderson in this first number is still the basic format used in current species accounts.

In 1980, the position of Managing Editor for Mammalian Species and the Special Publication series was created to deal with production of numbers in both. The position of Editor of Mammalian Species was retained, however, to solicit new species accounts, and to review and edit them. In 1983, an Associate Editor for Mammalian Species was added to the editorial team. Eight persons filled the Managing Editor position until it was eliminated in a reorganization in 2006. Three other people followed Anderson as Editor for Mammalian Species

until that position was terminated in 1992 and replaced with three Associate Editors. The title of the primary editor for the series was returned to Editor for Mammalian Species in 2006 when the *Special Publication* series was paused. Currently, the title of Editor-in-Chief for Mammalian Species is used with as many as six Associate Editors. It is noteworthy that the primary editor for this series has been a woman since 1996, with successive editors being Alicia V. Linzey, Barbara H. Blake, Virginia Hayssen, and since 2006 Meredith J. Hamilton. In 2006, the decision was made to take *Mammalian Species* to an online publication only, with 30 archival copies being printed and distributed to libraries throughout North America that have agreed to receive them in order to preserve examples of the series, following the LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) protocol. In 2010, accounts were gathered into volumes beginning with 42, but the individual account numbers were retained.

In its 50 years, *Mammalian Species* has published 986 mammal species accounts of as of 31 December 2019. Species that already have been covered include mammals from aardvark (*MS* 300) to zebra (Burchell’s, *MS* 157; mountain, *MS* 314; Grevy’s, 453) and from the colossal African elephant (*MS* 92) to pigmy shrew (*MS* 33) and Old World hog-nosed bat (*MS* 160). However, with the latest estimate of living species of mammals currently at ca. 6,500 (Burgin et al. 2018), considerable work remains to be done on species yet to be addressed.

Without a doubt, the rapid advances of the digital age have been among the most impactful external forces to affect ASM publications. As Chair of the Publications Committee, Chip Leslie kept a close eye on changes that were beginning to occur at his own institution and other nonprofit scientific societies. He reported these apparent trends annually to the ASM Board because the coming changes would not only affect the way we handled our publications, but would also affect ASM revenue, particularly through our library subscribers. In 2007, Leslie published an analysis of “the shifting mosaic of scholarly publishing,” which served to inform our membership and the larger scientific community about our strategy for the future of ASM publications. Of the 2,377 active members as of 31 December 2019, more than 61% receive the *Journal* only online.

No discussion of the ASM publications would be complete without acknowledgment of *The Spilogale, A Journal of Asinology*. This totally irreverent and irrelevant publication, which accepted any asinine, absurd, or abase articles, and was often filled with cartoons and sexual innuendos, made its first appearance at the meeting in Baton Rouge, LA, in 1939. It continued its irregular appearances at annual meetings of the ASM since that time (Manville 1959). All were written and printed anonymously and many times mysteriously appeared at each table setting at the annual banquet. *The Spilogale* probably had its origins in the *Auklet*, produced by our colleagues of the feathered persuasion, and was reinforced by the 1946 joint meeting with American Society of Ichthyologist and Herpetologists, which preceded the appearance of the 2nd issue of *The Spilogale* at the meeting in Toronto in 1948. Our lower-vertebrate colleagues issued volume 4 of *ICHTHERPS, A Cold-Blooded Journal of Vertebrates*, at the joint meeting in

1946. The most recent appearance of *The Spilogale* was at the 100th annual meeting in Washington, DC, and only time will tell whether or not it has a future as we move well into the 21st century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We dedicate this paper to Barbara H. Blake (b. 1937; d. 2019) who served an unprecedented number of roles for the ASM publications, including Associate Editor, Editor for Special Features, Journal Editor, and Special Issue Editor. Her favorite tee shirt read, “I’m silently correcting your grammar.” T. Genoways and M. G. Girard’s masterful efforts in creating the figure used herein are most appreciated. L. A. Ruedas critically reviewed an earlier draft of this manuscript, considerably improving it.

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