

The Incentive and Benefits to Publish Research

Greetings GPNSS members! By the time you read this editorial, many of you will be immersed in the Christmas holiday season. Here in the northern Great Plains, December is a month marked by the end of the year and a period of much needed rest and relaxation during the start of the winter season. Landscapes will soon be blanketed with snow and local floral and faunal species have adapted to the ensuing winter months ahead. Winter is a season that reminds you that you live in the plains states, and as such, should expect bitter cold temperatures, strong winds, and blowing and drifting snow. However, December is a great time to enjoy the outdoors across the Great Plains, a time to reflect on the year in review, and a great time to spend with friends and family.

A common activity to look forward to during December across the Great Plains is end-of-year holiday social gatherings prior to departing for Christmas break. Socializing is of particular relevance to this editorial because traditional Christmas parties provide many opportunities to spend time with graduate students and colleagues in other departments and research labs with whom you may seldom interact outside the classroom or workplace. Socializing over the course of the Holiday Season enables me to connect with students and colleagues on more of a personal level, gaining a much deeper understanding of their research philosophies and thoughts on publishing. Because I am a life-long proponent of publishing research, I strongly encourage my students and others that I co-advise to publish their work, and because of my service as Editor-in-Chief, subsequent conversation will focus on publishing and what it takes to publish one's work (Chamberlain 2009). During many recent conversations with students, it has become clear to me that uncertainty about publishing and a genuine lack of motivation to publish (unless strongly encouraged to do so by their advisors) are primary factors contributing to their reluctance or hesitancy to initiate the publication process (Chamberlain 2009). As a graduate student, I can vividly recall my strong desire to publish my work, so I often ask students who do not share my sentiment to explain their reasoning and thoughts on the subject (Chamberlain 2009). Not surprisingly, responses are varied, though several commonalities do arise (Chamberlain 2009).

Lack of guidance, uncertainty, and a fear of failure are common excuses for why wildlife professionals (particularly students) fail to attempt publication of their work (Chamberlain 2009). Although I cannot use lack of guidance as a convenient excuse for not publishing my work, many students and wildlife professionals are negatively impacted by what they perceive is a lack of mentoring and encouragement by their advisor throughout the publication process. However, I have used uncertainty and fear of failure as excuses in the past. I want to spend some time addressing each, in hopes of motivating others to publish their work (Chamberlain 2009).

As an advisor to undergraduate and graduate students, one of the most rewarding experiences for me is to see a student (regardless of whether that student is mine or not) successfully publish their research. I hope that my personal experiences and thoughts will provide some of the students conducting research across the Great Plains who may need a gentle nudge in the right direction to make publication of their work a reality (Chamberlain 2009).

As mentioned previously on the topic of lack of guidance, academic advisors and supervisors vary in their abilities to guide and mentor students and staff members as they strive to publish their work (Chamberlain 2009). Unlike many students, I was fortunate to have an advisor who provided me with guidance and instilled in me a strong desire to publish my work. Not surprisingly, some advisors have less motivation to publish than others and unfortunately, their students often follow their lead and fail to publish their work (Chamberlain 2009). However, there is hope for students who are steadfast in their desire to publish their research. Every academic institution has one to many scientists accomplished at publishing science, most of whom would be happy to mentor you if your desire to publish is perceived as genuine (Chamberlain 2009). Personally, I believe that it is the obligation of students and natural resource professionals to publish their work and until they do so, their job is not completed. I firmly believe that research is of little value unless it somehow adds to the knowledge of society and aids in "moving science forward." In my opinion, research must be disseminated to be useful. Thus, students should work diligently to publish their work to provide closure to their research, interesting and relevant information related directly to improving conservation and management of natural resources, and a level of self-satisfaction that is infectious (Chamberlain 2009). Most importantly, do not become a student who does not publish your work simply because your academic advisor or supervisor is not pushing you to do so (Chamberlain 2009).

Uncertainty is an inevitable part of the peer-review process that is directly related to the fear of failure (Chamberlain 2009). Despite publishing my first scientific more than a decade ago, I still feel a sense of trepidation and uncertainty with every manuscript I submit for consideration of publication. Unfortunately, there is no way of predicting the outcome of the peer-review process. Despite universal uncertainty in the publication process, authors can increase the likelihood of their work being deemed acceptable for publication by conducting good science and producing the best manuscript possible within the confines of their study design (Chamberlain 2009). Otherwise, uncertainty and the fear of failure should not prevent you from seeking to publish your work (Chamberlain 2009); just submit your work and see what happens! Make no mistake, everyone fails in their attempts to publish

science, particularly early on in your publishing career. Admittedly, failing in your attempts to publish is difficult to accept, but do not take reviewer criticism personally (easier said than done, I know). Instead, do your best to accept the failure and use it as self-motivation to improve your manuscript (Chamberlain 2009).

Now, what about the continued hesitation to publish in the *Journal* because it is not recognized by Thompson Reuters Web of Science, ISI Web of Knowledge, or other indexing engines? In my previous editorials, I noted that historically the *Journal* was recognized by indexing engines. Further, our current effort to provide a quality publication venue continues to be a long-term goal of the *Journal* to improve the likelihood of being relisted by reputable indexing engines. I wanted to take a moment to provide an update on the efforts of the Editorial Board to achieve this goal. During early fall 2012, I contacted the ISI Web of Knowledge to formally initiate the review of the *Journal*. The formal review process is underway and will continue through August 2013, with a decision to relist the *Journal* being rendered during early fall 2013. The timeliness of publication continues to be a monitored closely and will likely be a primary factor in whether the journal will be relisted. The Editorial Board does not anticipate this being a concern with future issues of the *Journal*. I continue to believe strongly that we can maintain the regional Great Plains appeal among our membership while being recognized nationally by prominent indexing engines. I will be diligent in providing our membership with regular

updates regarding the formal review process.

We are excited to be working with researchers in Canada to publish the Conference Proceedings of the 23rd North American Prairie Conference as a special issue of the *Journal*. Specifically, manuscripts derived from oral, symposium, or poster presentations are being submitted for consideration of publication in the Conference Proceedings. We are asking that prospective authors submit original manuscripts not published in another journal by 31 Jan 2013 with subsequent publication of this issue in the *Journal* during late summer or early fall 2013. Due to the increased work load associated with this publication, I have appointed a co-editor of this issue to streamline the peer-review process.

In closing, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the *Journal*, please feel free to contact me. After all, this is your journal, and I very much appreciate your thoughts about it. Until next time, have a safe winter field season everyone!

—Christopher N. Jacques
Editor-in-Chief

LITERATURE CITED

- Chamberlain, M. J. 2009. Editor's Message – The Motivation to Publish. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 73(4):479–480.