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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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INTRODUCING THE *CONDOR*'S NEW EDITORIAL BOARDS

In the past year the editorial team has made strides to provide the journal with a fresher and wider international perspective. In that time we have created two editorial boards and have begun a workshop that we will bring to various conferences. These new editorial boards are designed to increase the journal's profile and to include a wider breadth of scientists working in the field of ornithology. These boards will function apart from but in concert with the journal's more conventional Board of Reviewing Editors.

Latin American Editorial Board

The new Latin American board is not merely a collection of ornithologists who live or work in Latin America. Although its members will serve as reviewers or as handling editors, its chief purpose is to promote submission of and, especially, enhance the quality of manuscripts from Latin America. Manuscripts submitted to the *Condor* that appear substantively sound but need help with language or format are sent to this new board, to be chaired initially by Luciano Naka. In such instances a board member will be assigned to assist the authors both to bring the language up to standards and to ensure that the flow of scientific ideas is sound. After that process, the "new and improved" manuscript is reviewed through the journal's normal channels, meaning it will be sent for peer review—which may include review by a member of the Board of Reviewing Editors, by a different member of the Latin American Board, by an external referee, or by some combination of these people. Our decision to create a special board for Latin America reflects the large percentage of submissions the *Condor* receives from that part of the world, but it is not meant to imply that other regions are not important to us. If this experiment works out well, then we will strive to establish comparable boards for other regions.

Early-Career Editorial Board

Students, postdocs, and other researchers early in their career often have little chance to review manuscripts and do not gain such experience until after they either have published themselves or are fortunate enough to have a mentor who allows them to assist with a review assigned to the mentor. For many, the experience of peer review is a trial by fire: one suddenly grapples with a review despite little or no prior training. Yet researchers in the early stages of their careers often have a tremendous amount of insight and a good critical eye. The *Condor*'s new editorial board is designed to take advantage of this burgeoning expertise yet also provide training in how to critique a manuscript constructively and effectively. The board will be composed of 10–15 graduate students and newly minted postdocs or research assistants, although its exact membership will revolve regularly, with complete turnover expected every year or so. This turnover is to ensure that we have broad participation, that we can include as many interested early-career researchers as possible. A manuscript sent to this board for one of the peer reviews will be assigned to a faculty mentor, the inaugural one being Tim O'Connell, who will select someone on the board to complete the actual review but will assist as needed with questions and advice.

Scientific Writing and Reviewing Workshop

An ability to write and review scientific papers is something we are expected to have, yet few of us have been taught even the basics of either; rather, skills are acquired by means of trial and error, osmosis, or, occasionally, thoughtful tutelage. As part of the ornithological community, we all have the responsibility to help authors communicate effectively, whether by fostering sound writing skills or by fostering an ability to critique manuscripts constructively. In an effort to meet this responsibility, we created a workshop dedicated to the ins and outs of scientific writing and peer review. Our first workshop was held, with the assistance of T. J. Fontaine, during the joint conference of the Cooper Ornithological Society, Association of Field Ornithologists, and Wilson Ornithological Society at Kearney, Nebraska, in March 2011. We were pleased with both the level of participation and the positive feedback we received. Our second workshop, aided ably by Carlos Bosque, a long-time Reviewing Editor for the *Condor*, took place at the Neotropical Ornithological Congress in Cuzco, Peru, in November 2011. This workshop was refocused to address specific needs and concerns of Latin American authors, particularly those at the start of their careers. We already have another workshop slated for the forthcoming (August 2012) North American Ornithological Conference (http://www.naoc-v2012.com/) at Vancouver, British Columbia. Our goal is to create a workshop that can be led by anyone, and to that end we encourage participants and educators to hold these workshops at their own institutions as well as additional conferences. If you are interested in helping with our workshop program, please contact us at condor@ou.edu.

—The *Condor* Editorial Team

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