

## Editorial

# ***Cetaceans through the ‘looking glass’ – they have much to tell!***



It gives me great pleasure to present our first issue for 2011, volume 4! Upon reflection I realize that we have achieved somewhat of another milestone having

completed 3 volumes and now starting our 4th year. This, by some standards, is considered to be an index of a journal that is here to stay. We agree! There were times when we all wondered if we could pull it off especially since JMATE is a completely volunteer based journal. However, thanks to the true dedication of JMATE’s editorial staff and the wonderful support of all our reviewers, we succeeded. JMATE has been able to maintain its’ rigorous yet open minded review of each and every manuscript that has come to us, improve turn-around times (though we still want to shorten this further) and continue to put out what we feel is a valuable contribution to the global understanding of important issues related to marine animals. No humbleness here!! Our authors have also been most patient and co-operative and for all this, as the Editor-in-Chief, I am truly grateful. So where does one go from here? Simple - we will continue to strive for the best product possible and be responsive to our readership. Hopefully our visibility and profile in the marine mammal community will continuously increase. There are a number of ways this can be accomplished including listings in various search engines and ensuring that the articles are easily available and open access to anyone who wishes them. By having our expenses kept to a minimum through volunteerism and the support of OERS, we have been able, at least up to now, to offer free access to all our issues. It is our collective feeling that this is important for optimal effective dissemination of information and exposure for our authors.

This issue has within it an interesting focus on

cetaceans. By using a diversity of observational and scientific tools the papers herein each contribute a wide range of valuable information. In our featured article, there is the exciting identification that there is actually not one but 2 distinct species of finless porpoises - an amazing thing considering most of the time we hear only of the loss of existing species. It is nice that some scientists still have the challenge and opportunity to recognize differences in anatomy, structure or genetics that permits the creation of new categories of marine species. This continues to illustrate how diverse the planet is and how important it is to catalogue and recognize these differences as an important part of the overall diversity of the aquatic ecosystem. The second paper takes on the difficult task of acquiring fin whale sighting data and marine shipping traffic data and correlating the two to try to offer solutions to minimizing ship strike possibilities in a heavily trafficked portion of the north western Mediterranean Sea where numerous whale strikes have been reported. The authors hope with this information not only can shipping companies lower their costs and risks but that this species can be helped by minimizing collisions and stress – a noble and valuable thing all around. Then yet a third paper details humpback whale sighting information in a bay in Peru, identifying seasonal variations in the group make-up of these sightings and re-emphasizes the ongoing importance of these areas to the wide range of migrating cetacean species. Each of the authors have, by using both observational techniques in combination with traditional anatomical, external morphology, genetics, or mathematical techniques, contributed something valuable to our understanding of marine mammals and their status. JMATE is



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honored to have the work of these authors published with us and we hope you all will enjoy and appreciate their contributions.

Dr Carin Wittnich  
Editor-in-Chief, JMATE

