

## Comments from the Editor

With this first issue of Volume 115, we are instituting two major changes. First, we have replaced the frontispiece with a new cover design that includes a color illustration. All authors are encouraged to submit illustrations to be considered for the cover. Selection will be based on quality of the submitted illustration (photograph or artwork) and the associated paper. These color covers can be obtained with reprints, and we hope to see framed copies of them on the walls of institutions in the future. Second, we are instituting a new feature, called *OVERVIEWS*, that will highlight at least one article in each issue of *The Auk*. *OVERVIEWS* provides an opportunity to explain important advances in science in a more general perspective that highlights the significance of the work for scientists within the field as well as for a general audience interested in birds outside of that particular field. I also hope that *OVERVIEWS* will help *The Auk*, and ornithology in general, to gain greater attention from the news media. Toward that end, I will send each *OVERVIEWS* to the wire services so that the work of avian biologists is more readily available to the lay public.

In addition to these new features, I am reviving the Commentary section with periodic invited commentaries to highlight hot topics in ornithology. This issue of the journal, for example, contains invited commentaries on a possible name change for *The Auk*. A vigorous campaign has emerged to change the name of *The Auk*. Part of this process involves changing the Bylaws to provide a mechanism for changing the journal name. The proposed Bylaws

changes were preliminarily approved by the Fellows at the 115th Stated Meeting and are printed in this issue of *The Auk*. A final vote on these Bylaws changes will occur at the 116th Stated Meeting. The future name of our journal is undecided, but the desire for a change is strong. These commentaries provide "pro" and "con" sides to the possible name change to aid discussion of this important issue. Readers are welcome to suggest additional topics for future Commentaries.

The number of papers submitted to *The Auk* has doubled in the past year and a half, and the submission rate continues to increase. Nevertheless, processing of papers submitted to *The Auk* has reached a fairly stable turnaround speed. We now average just under three months for the initial decision to authors and about one year from submission to print. Remember that this is an average; outliers exist for various reasons, but largely from difficulty in obtaining timely reviews. The processing of manuscripts is strongly enhanced by the efficient Editorial Board (see inside front cover for a listing). The Associate Editors deserve our thanks for the extensive work that they do for the journal and for the AOU. As the number of submissions increases, we will continue to expand the size of the Editorial Board to keep the processing speed as rapid as possible, and we expect to maintain the current rate of processing. If submissions continue to climb, we will have to increase the size of future volumes of *The Auk*. I look forward to continued growth and vigor for *The Auk* as we continue to move into the future.

## Proposed Amendments to the AOU Bylaws

At the 115th Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, the Fellows voted to simplify the Bylaws by removing specific references to the names of the AUK and ORNITHOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS and to add an amendment to Article VII of the bylaws that states the procedure to be used if a name change is proposed.

These changes keep the focus of our Bylaws on procedure rather than on specifics. Similarly, we removed the amount of annual dues from the Bylaws in favor of a statement of the procedure for setting dues rates.

The proposed changes as approved by the Fellows (in bold type) are:

Article II. Section 1.

"nine Elective Councilors, the editor of the **journal**, the editor of the **monograph series**, . . ."

Article IV. Section 7.

"The Editor of the **journal**, the Editor of the **monograph series**, . . ."

Article V. Section 4.

" . . . the serial publication of the Union (delete 'entitled the AUK')."

Article V. Section 5.

" . . . of each issue of the **journal**."

Article VII. Section 1.

" . . . , a serial journal of ornithology (delete 'called the AUK'), and such reports, . . ."

Article VII. The new Section 2.

**At least two months before a meeting the Secretary shall send to each Fellow and Elective Member any proposed change of name of the journal or monograph series. The name can be changed only by a vote of the majority of Council members present at the Council meeting and a vote of two-thirds of the Fellows and Elective Members present at the meeting of the Fellows and Elective Members.**

Article VII. The current Section 2 will be re-numbered **Section 3**.

These amendments focus the Bylaws on process and provide a clear procedure for change that is contained in a single section. They assume the current names THE AUK and ORNITHOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS are the names of the journal and the monograph series.