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This issue:

Welcome Aboard!
Who Are We (And Why Are We Here)?
BWG Steering Committee
Membership and Finance Report
BWG Activities to Date
Forthcoming Activities and Events
We Invite Your Participation
BWG News Items Wanted

Welcome Aboard!

Welcome aboard on this maiden voyage of the Biometrics Working Group newsletter. Much behind-the-scenes work has taken place over the past year to get the BWG on solid footing. In this issue of the newsletter, we want to inform you of our activities and to invite your participation. Whether you are or are not a current member of the BWG, we thank you for taking the time to read this brief letter and for considering how participation in the BWG can benefit you.

Who Are We (And Why Are We Here)?

Members of the Biometrics Working Group are biologists and statisticians who share a common interest of solving problems in the wildlife sciences through the development, application, and promotion of sound statistical techniques and reasoning. We have a variety of educational backgrounds and concentrations. Some of us have addressed wildlife biometrics issues for more than a couple of decades; others are now in school. We are employed in both the public and private sectors, and we are found in 7 countries.

The BWG was formed in 1994 to provide a forum for exchange of ideas and concerns among biometricians and the biometrics-minded of The Wildlife Society. Among our goals are to encourage the use of sound statistical design and quantitative thinking in problems that face wildlife researchers and managers. The principal means of meeting our goals are to provide communications environments within our group (workshops and symposia, electronic communications, the newsletter) and to provide expert resources beyond our group (technical reviewing, position statements, continuing education opportunities).

BWG Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed in 1995 to increase contact points for working group members. The committee's charge was to move aggressively towards finalizing the Working Group's charter and to facilitate the election of officers (see news item below). Members of the Steering Committee were recruited so that a diversity of perspectives would be represented. Steering Committee members have been and will be soliciting input and seeking participation in activities such as reviewing the draft charter, nominating officers, organizing technical sessions, developing an electronic forum to facilitate communication and interactions among members, and contributing to the newsletter. The Steering Committee's responsibility for such activities will be assumed by officers after approval of the charter and their election. Names, phone numbers, and Internet addresses of Steering Committee members appear at the end of the newsletter. Until officers are elected, please contact any member of the Steering Committee with your questions, comments and suggestions for furthering the Biometrics Working Group of The Wildlife Society.

*Prepared by Christine Bunck
Steering Committee Interim Co-Chair*

Membership and Finance Report

As of 29 February 1996, 60 members had paid BWG Dues for 1996. The treasury balance as of 29 February 1996 was \$751.34. Membership dues from 1994 to 29 February 1996 totaled \$760.00, and interest credited from August 1995 totaled \$7.54. Expenses over the period were \$16.20.

Prepared by Clint Moore, Interim Treasurer

BWG Activities to Date

The BWG sponsored symposia at the first two annual conferences of The Wildlife Society. In 1994, a symposium was dedicated to survey methodology. Adaptive management was the topic in 1995. These symposia prompted useful discussion and deeper thinking about statistical issues under the respective topics. The presenters at both symposia (noted below in **boldface**) did an excellent job and receive the thanks of the Biometrics Working Group.

Survey Methods: Human Dimensions in Wildlife (Albuquerque, N.M., 1994). **Steve Sheriff** (Mo. Dep. Conserv.) organized and chaired this symposium. Ten papers covered major issues concerning the design, analysis, and associated issues of conducting surveys. Topics concerned sampling frame construction, questionnaire design, nonresponse bias, recruitment of survey participants, survey methodologies, categorical data analysis, validation of results, and an overview of total survey error. Authors and paper titles were:

- Paul I. Padding** and Paul H. Geissler (U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv., Laurel, Md.). *Survey Methodology for the National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program.*
- Vernon L. Wright** (La. State Univ., Baton Rouge). *Effects of Sampling Frame Problems.*
- Paulette Johnson** (Slippery Rock Univ., Slippery Rock, Pa.). *Attitudinal Question Construction and Mechanics of Survey Instrumentation for Mailed Questionnaires.*
- J. Edward Kautz** and Robert M. Sanford (N.Y. Dep. Environ. Conserv., Latham). *Dealing with Nonresponse in Wildlife Harvest Surveys.*

Jody W. Enck and Daniel J. Decker (Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y.). *Gaining Insights about Stakeholders through Focus Groups, Nominal Group Techniques, and In-depth Personal Interviews.*

Donna L. Minnis, Lisa Grise, and R. Ben Peyton (Mich. State Univ., East Lansing). *Mail Recruitment of Michigan Anglers for Focus Groups: An Investigation of Monetary Incentives and Travel Distance.*

James M. Kienzler (Ia. Dep. Nat. Resour., Boone). *Cross-classified Categorical Data Analysis for Surveys.*

Susan C. Barro and Michael J. Manfredo (Colo. State Univ., Fort Collins). *Developing Measures with Predictive Validity: an Overlooked Factor of Human Dimensions Research.*

David H. Thorne, Edward K. Brown, Steven L. Sheriff, and Daniel J. Witter (Mo. Dep. Conserv., Jefferson City). *A Model Methodology for Conducting User Surveys at Recreation Areas.*

Fern Fillion (Can. Wildl. Serv., Ottawa, Ont.) and **Steven L. Sheriff** (Mo. Dep. Conserv., Columbia). *Coming to Grips with Total Survey Error.*

Adaptive Management of Wildlife Resources: Developments and Directions (Portland, Oreg., 1995). Five papers were given at a symposium organized and chaired by Bill Kendall (U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv.). The lead paper discussed the practicality of adaptive management and was given by a pioneer in this field. Papers that followed addressed both theoretical and applied aspects of the topic and included applications in population and habitat/landscape management. The papers and authors were:

- Carl J. Walters** (Univ. B.C., Vancouver). *Theory Versus Practice in Adaptive Management of Renewable Resources.*
- Michael J. Conroy** and Jennifer E. Crocker (Ga. Coop. Fish and Wildl. Res. Unit, Univ. Ga., Athens). *A Framework For Optimal Decision Making in the Management of Landscapes.*
- Steven L. Sheriff**, Wayne R. Porath, and Dale D. Humburg (Mo. Dep. Conserv., Columbia). *Adapting Adaptive Management in Missouri - Show Me.*
- Fred A. Johnson**, Clinton T. Moore, **William L. Kendall**, James A. Dubovsky, David F. Caithamer, and James R. Kelley, Jr. (U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv., Laurel, Md.). *Uncertainty and the Management of Mallard Harvests.*
- Byron K. Williams** (Vt. Coop. Fish and Wildl. Res. Unit, Univ. Vt., Burlington). *Adaptive Optimization and the Harvest of Biological Populations.*

Contributed by Steve Sheriff and Bill Kendall

Forthcoming Activities and Events

BWG Charter. Under the initiative of Co-Chair Steve Sheriff, the Steering Committee has settled on a draft charter for the Working Group. The charter establishes the BWG, lays out the Group's goals and objectives, and defines the Group's structure and operations. The Committee plans to mail a copy of the proposed charter to current BWG members by May 15 and to conduct a referendum on its approval by June 15. If you would like a copy sooner, contact Steve Sheriff or Clint Moore.

Nomination of officers. After adoption of the charter, efforts will focus on nomination and election of officers. The Steering Committee will appoint a committee to nominate a slate of officers and to conduct an election. The Steering Committee is optimistically targeting the Cincinnati annual meeting for completion of the process.

Two sponsored symposia at the Cincinnati meeting. Christine Bunck (NBS, Washington, D.C.) and John Sauer (NBS, Laurel, Md.) are each organizing a half-day symposium on the topic of population monitoring. Christine's session, *Monitoring: Goals, Protocols and Decisions*, addresses the *why* and *wherefore* of monitoring programs. A series of papers will focus on the importance of managers clearly articulating the purposes and uses of a monitoring program:

Barry Noon (U.S. For. Serv.). *Conceptual Issues in the Monitoring of Ecological Resources.*

Kate Faulkner (Channel Islands Natl. Park). *Monitoring Natural Resources in Channel Islands National Park, California.*

Jim Karr (Univ. Wash.). *Biological Monitoring in Theory and Practice.*

Steve Rathburn (Univ. Ga.). *Statistical Issues Towards the Design of Environmental Monitoring Programs.*

Jim Nichols (Natl. Biol. Serv.). *Why Monitoring is Not Enough: On the Role of Monitoring in the Management of Animal Populations.*

John's session, *Monitoring Large-scale Change in Wildlife Populations*, concerns the assessment of population change. Presentations of methodological issues and specific case studies include:

John R. Sauer and William A. Link (Natl. Biol. Serv.). *Why Are Analyses of Large-scale Surveys Controversial?*

William A. Link and John R. Sauer (Natl. Biol. Serv.). *Parametric Models of Population Change.*

Clinton T. Moore (U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv.). *Semiparametric Regression Modeling and the Description of General Patterns in Population Data.*

Grey W. Pendleton (Alas. Dep. Fish and Game). *Nonparametric Methods for Estimating Population Trends.*

Thierry Boulinier, James D. Nichols, Kenneth H. Pollock, and James E. Hines (Natl. Biol. Serv. and N.C. State Univ.). *Capture-recapture Approach to Estimation of Species Richness and Rates of Extinction, Colonization, and Turnover.*

Richard J. Barker (Landcare Research). *Trap-catch Monitoring of Brushtail Possums in New Zealand.*

Bruce G. Peterjohn and John R. Sauer (Natl. Biol. Serv.). *The Breeding Bird Survey: 30 Years of North American Bird Population Data.*

Robert E. Bennetts, John R. Sauer, and William A. Link (Fla. Coop. Fish and Wildl. Res. Unit and Natl. Biol. Serv.). *Inferences from an Annual Count of Snail Kites in Florida, 1967-1994.*

Grey W. Pendleton and J. P. Lewis (Alas. Dep. Fish and Game). *Population Trends of Harbor Seals in Alaska.*

Michael J. Mossman, L. H. Hartman, and R. Hay (Wis. Dep. Nat. Resour.). *The Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey: 1984-1995 Population Trends.*

Contributed by Clint Moore, Christine Bunck and John Sauer

We Invite Your Participation

The BWG is in its infancy. Like any young thing, the BWG is impressionable, so this is an exciting time to get involved and influence the evolution of the Group and its activities.

Recruiting your membership is a start, but we must have more. We need your ideas, your experience, and your strong back. Please consider how you might serve in the capacity of an officer or a committee chair. We envision becoming an electronically-connected organization as soon as we can, and you may be the one best able to provide the special talents and resources we must have. The need for ideas for conference symposia, workshops, member services, and newsletter items will never end.

We think that the BWG will return more than what you invest. For many, biometrics work in a wildlife setting

comes with particular challenges: among these are professional isolation, overextension on consulting assignments, staying on top of the explosion of statistics and wildlife literature, and communicating statistical principles to colleagues, administrators, and the public. Lucky are those who have successfully developed strategies to address these challenges. Most likely though, these or other challenges are a daily source of personal strain. By connecting you with other biometrics professionals, we hope that the BWG network becomes a resource for taking on these challenges.

We hope you will join or re-join the BWG in 1996. The most recent year of your paid membership appears on the mailing label of this newsletter. Please join by **April 15, 1996** to receive a copy of the proposed charter and ballot. A TWS application form is enclosed for your convenience. Please indicate your TWS member number on the application and send to TWS, attn. M. Hodgdon.

BWG News Items Wanted

We hope this newsletter was informative and has been of help. If you have any items for future editions of this newsletter, we want to hear from you. Also, if you have any comments concerning this newsletter, please let us know what your views are. Send items and comments to:

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Thank you for your support and interest.

STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE BIOMETRICS WORKING GROUP

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