

EDITORIAL

Herpetotropicos, the Journal of Tropical Amphibians and Reptiles, started in 2004 with a goal to publish peer-reviewed articles on tropical herpetofauna. The idea actually was born in 2003, through the joint efforts of Enrique La Marca and his research associates Stefan Lötters, Abraham Mijares-Urrutia and Juan Elias García-Pérez, with common interests in the Collection of Amphibians and Reptiles of the Laboratory of Biogeography of the University of Los Andes (ULABG), in Venezuela. ULABG took over the newborn journal as its official publication, under the auspices of a private local NGO, the Biogeos Foundation.

The publication was originally quarterly, with a single contribution in each issue. However, by the third issue, it was obvious that the journal could incorporate more articles. By the end of 2004, the journal contained six articles in total; the first two issues with single contributions, while the last two with a couple of contributions each. The number of printed copies was 200. The first 2005 issue soon doubled the number of articles in the preceding number, and the printed copies rose to 400. Afterwards, in the middle of sociopolitical and economic difficulties in the country, Herpetotropicos failed to appear for two years in a row. In the meantime, we invited Venezuelan herpetologists to support the journal with their contributions, and seek financial support. All this was under the framework of expanding from the niche of the ULABG collection to a national coverage and, later, to include contributions from other Latin American countries. In spite of a regrettable gap in the sequence of appearance, from March 2005 to March 2007, the steady growth manifested in the first five issues served to get the attention and support of the University of the Andes. Under the financial support of this institution, we printed three issues during the year 2007, each with 500 copies.

We are starting the fifth year of the journal, with a modest background of eight printed issues, totaling 27 articles written by 46 authors, covering amphibians and reptiles of five Latin American countries. With merely three years of printed issues, the journal already achieved the description of 28 new taxa: 26 new species (16 amphibians, 3 lizards and 7 snakes) and two new genera of frogs. Our editorial staff grew from an original group of four in 2004, to 18 people beginning 2008. The later represent eight countries, from the Americas and Europe.

The journal publishes articles in English or Spanish. The first is understandable: English is the language most employed by herpetologists worldwide to communicate their findings. The use of Spanish, in view of this reality, could be arguable. Nonetheless, it is the language spoken in the countries housing the largest cumulative herpetological diversity on Earth. With the use of this second language, we expect to attract manuscripts among graduate students and young researchers coming from Spanish-speaking tropical countries. Furthermore, we hope to reach undergraduates to attract them to the field of herpetology at large. In the case of articles written in Spanish, to facilitate comprehension among other readers, we provide English abstracts, as well as a translation into English of all figures and tables.

Our immediate goals are, first, to attract contributions to assemble the issues needed to fill the gap in regularity we have from the recent past and, second, to widen our scope to other tropical countries. The invitation goes to everyone interested in disclosing original research on amphibian and reptile species from tropical environments all around the globe. As a journal entirely devoted to tropical herps, your contributions will be most welcome!

E. La Marca
Editor