A message from the new chief editor

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The *Journal of Ethology* began publication in 1983 as the official journal of the Japan Ethological Society, and since 2000 (Volume 18) it has been published by Springer. The late Dr. Toshitaka Hidaka, the first chief editor and also the first president of the society, had very high ambitions for the *Journal of Ethology* to be an international journal that would cover all aspects of animal (including human) behavior, with a policy of accepting submissions from any country. Unlike other academic journals in Japan in the early 1980s, which were published at least partly in Japanese, the *Journal of Ethology*, from the first volume, was in English only. Before the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, under four successive chief editors—Dr. Toshitaka Hidaka, Dr. Takeji Kimura, Dr. Eiiti Kasuya, and Dr. Yutaka Saito—the internationalization of the journal still had not been fully accomplished. Partly due to then-undeveloped Internet connectivity, referees for the journal were mostly chosen from among Japanese society members.

During the period 2002–2004, with the fifth chief editor, Dr. Kazuki Tsuji, I worked as the associate editor of the journal and promoted its further internationalization. We discontinued the practice of having manuscripts sent by postal mail and limited communications among authors, editors, and referees to e-mail and attached files. As these fundamental changes in communications greatly expanded the range of authors and referees we could call upon, we increased the ratio of non-Japanese authors from less than 50% to more than 80%, and that of non-Japanese referees from 5 to 85% (including world-class experts only) during

this period. As a result, the impact factor (IF) of the journal increased from 0.412 (2001) to 0.725 (2003). After the terms of the sixth chief editor, Dr. Keisuke Ueda, and the seventh, Dr. Yoshitaka Tsubaki, the IF reached 1.222 (2009) and is still increasing. This value is not so high but is substantial nonetheless. Now the society has requested that I return to the journal as the eighth chief editor. Carrying out the intention of Dr. Hidaka for the internationalization of the journal and following the former chief editors' great achievements, I would like to make all possible efforts to raise the esteem of the journal with the support of our 17 excellent associate editors.

The *Journal of Ethology* features reviews and original papers relating to all aspects of animal behavior. Papers on field, laboratory, and theoretical studies are welcomed. Many other ethological journals prefer studies on exclusive hypothesis tests. Undoubtedly, the hypothesis-testing approach is broadly accepted as a standard scientific method by many researchers. However, this approach needs testable hypotheses themselves as a matter of course, and hypotheses are usually proposed from descriptive observations. All the chief editors of our journal have regarded descriptive studies as very important. In the *Journal of Ethology*, however, the authors of pure descriptive studies are always requested to provide background information about behaviors in their study and an appropriate context to establish the scientific importance of their description, which in turn produce fascinating hypotheses to explain the behaviors. Because of these conservative characteristics, the *Journal of Ethology* might not be among the group of top scientific journals but does cover a broad range of studies that usually are neglected by the top journals. Considering the publication bias in which negative evidence against hypotheses are less often published, qualified descriptive studies in our journal can

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survive even if new theoretical developments annihilate not only the scientific validity of hypotheses themselves but also, consequently, those studies concentrating on tests of such obsolete hypotheses.

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Under the brilliant blue sky of Perth, Western Australia, in early summer,
Yukio Yasui