Change of editorship and scope

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The *European Journal of Wildlife Research* evolved from the German language journal, *Zeitschrift für Jagdwissenschaft*, founded in 1955 as a game biology journal mainly publishing papers from Central European authors. With time, the original niche of this journal within Europe attracted authors from other regions, the subject range became broader, and a growing proportion of the papers were written in English. The greatest change, however, occurred in 2004 when the journal was re-launched as *European Journal of Wildlife Research*. This was the beginning of a very successful development, making the *European Journal of Wildlife Research* a leading international journal in its field.

After more than 20 years of work for the journal, I stepped down from the position of Editor in Chief of the EJWR in September 2009. It is my pleasure to thank all the authors, referees, and members of the editorial board whose respective contributions made the journal a success for all these years. My special thanks go to the Editorial Director from Springer-Verlag, Dieter Czeschlik, for his continuous support.

I wish my successor the best of luck for his work, and I am confident that the quality of the journal will continue to rise in the future.

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The *European Journal of Wildlife Research* successfully fills a vital niche at the intersection of several disciplines. However, this has also made setting a limit to the manuscripts suitable for the journal increasingly difficult. As such, we would like to take the opportunity of the change in the journal's leadership to clarify concepts with this Editorial and to define the scope of the journal in light of the upcoming challenges for the wildlife research field.

Ticks are wildlife. Cities are wildlife habitats. Wildlife includes all free-living species with an impact on species with an economic or cultural value and their habitats. This means free-ranging domestic animals, invasive species, and native species and parasites, key plants, pests, game, and endangered species. Abundant species, e.g., some birds, lagomorphs, and wild ungulates, are, however, the central subjects in wildlife research. Wildlife research means producing information to improve the conservation and management of wildlife and their habitats. Here, any of the actors involved can be considered for the *European Journal of Wildlife Research*. However, it is the interaction between them, rather than any actor alone, which best fits into the journal's scope. The *European Journal of Wildlife Research* has a global geographic coverage, and efforts are being made to reflect this in the international composition of its Editorial Board.

Hunting has been a traditional driver of wildlife management. This recreational activity has a huge impact on wildlife conservation worldwide. However, hunting is also constrained by other interests. Anti-hunting opinions are increasingly popular, particularly among the urban public. As a result, limitations on hunting activities in wildlife areas, e.g., protected areas, are also increasing. Urban areas, where hunting is banned or restricted, are growing, creating landscapes that are suitable for opportunistic wildlife. Overabundance situations occur in protected areas, partly because of hunting restrictions, and conversely

in those hunting areas benefitting from over-dense wildlife populations to increase the annual hunting harvest. These are sources of human–wildlife conflicts where a scientific background is urgently needed to keep the balance in decision making and new wildlife control techniques.

Habitat loss or habitat change, e.g., in forests and in agrosystems, has a worldwide impact on the distribution, abundance, and sustainable use of wildlife. In a broader sense, global change will also affect wildlife and their habitats. Invasive species are becoming a major challenge for conservation, and toxicants accumulate in the trophic chains and interfere with wildlife use. Monitoring can help foresee changes, design appropriate management actions, and measure their impact. One result of global change is the increase of emerging diseases, particularly at the wildlife–livestock interface. This, in turn, requires sound scientific knowledge on the multiple host, pathogen, and environmental factors that determine disease emergence and

disease maintenance. Wildlife disease control is only possible if host ecology and habitat factors are carefully considered.

In summary, interdisciplinarity is now needed more than ever, and the *European Journal of Wildlife Research* can significantly contribute to bridging the gaps between disciplines. The number of scientific journals is continuously rising and a higher degree of specialization is one of the expected outcomes, along with an increased competition for authors and readers. The aim of *European Journal of Wildlife Research* is to become a global reference journal for wildlife research in a broad sense and with an interdisciplinary perspective. We need the active help of all of you, our colleagues in the international wildlife research community, to successfully meet our goal and to continue to serve the community best in the face of future challenges.

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