

Herpetological articles in *The WA Naturalist*: A celebration of amateur and professional contributions

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Abstract

An appraisal of the contributions by amateur and professional herpetologists to *The Western Australian Naturalist*, the journal of the WA Naturalists' Club, at the completion of its centenary year in 2024, is presented here. The first journal was published in June 1947, and over the next 78 years, 211 herpetologically related articles and papers appeared in 201 issues, with amateurs contributing 72 of these. Several of the more prolific amateurs are profiled here. Articles on lizards were the most popular with 118 contributions, followed by snakes (39), frogs (17), turtles (13) and reptiles generally (5). There were 19 frog and reptile-specific surveys, and there were an additional 26 comprehensive biological surveys that included herpetological lists. The gain in knowledge of Western Australia's herpetofauna has been greatly facilitated by the WA Naturalists' Club's inclusive and welcoming attitude towards anyone interested in wildlife, including families, amateur enthusiasts and professionals. This includes numerous field excursions, meetings and publications in the journal.

Introduction

On 18 June 1947, *The Western Australian Naturalist* first appeared. Vincent N. Serventy, then club president, described it as:

“...a magazine to publish the original work of our member field-naturalists, work that will be a contribution to the knowledge of our flora and fauna.” (Serventy 1947, p. 24).

He and the club's committee would have been delighted with the response by the members, with 76 articles

appearing in that first volume. Although it was not intended to replace the *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia*, which published the results of professional researchers, many of those same researchers also submitted original work to this new publication. The contents of that first volume illustrate well the members' most popular field of interest, with over half of the contents ornithological, followed a distant second by botanical articles.

The first of three herpetological papers in that inaugural volume would not appear until the fourth issue. It was

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