

## Preface

After five years as Editor-in-Chief of *Ornis Fennica* Dr. Matti Koivula is leaving the editorial team, coinciding with the start of his new position at the University of Eastern Finland. Thank you Matti for your valuable work! I wish you all success in the future. I have now grabbed the steering wheel with a mix of enthusiasm, excitement, and perhaps still some uncertainty about what the day-to-day work as editor actually entails. I am a 33-year old theoretical population ecologist, whose empirical research has almost exclusively concerned birds. Together with our expanded editorial team – now consisting of seven Associate Editors and one Technical Editor – we will do our best to keep the good work going.

Our grand aim is to keep *Ornis Fennica* as an important and attractive place to publish and follow research for Fennoscandian and North European ornithologists. As this does not differ much from earlier goals, I have no intentions of doing substantial reforms to a concept that works. However, *Ornis Fennica* will not maintain its position automatically. Despite our geographical niche, there is an inevitable competition with other ornithological journals. To stay ahead and be relevant in a changing landscape there is a need to constantly adjust and improve the editorial policy and reevaluate its focus. It is also a cause for concern that citation metrics for many journals are going up, while those for *Ornis Fennica* are at the moment stable or slightly decreasing.

The largest change in editorial policy over the last year, is the decision to no longer consider purely descriptive papers, or documentations of special observations (sample size  $n = 1$ ). We now require all papers to assess clearly formulated study questions or hypotheses, with conclusions based on formal data analyses, modelling or solid reasoning. Unfortunately, this is also the last nail in the coffin for a certain kind of traditional natural history papers in *Ornis Fennica*, but I believe this decision will benefit the journal in the long run. I admit that there is still a need for citable and searchable online archives, where interesting observations and data sets can be published.



It is not far-fetched to compare the importance of statistical models to that of binoculars as ornithological tools. Our field is going through a transformation with emerging methods such as occupancy modelling, spatially explicit capture–recapture and integrated population models. Increasingly, the variability in data is decomposed into biological and observational processes. While I find this positive, I realize that many proficient researchers are unaware or uncomfortable with this development, and likewise, that these methods cannot be applied to all valuable data sets out there. A good paper needs not to use complicated or fancy statistical methods, but it is crucial that we communicate the answers to our research questions in a straightforward way and acknowledge the possible limitations implied by the data and method used. The instructions for authors on our web pages have been updated to clarify some of these issues.

Finally, I sincerely hope that you enjoy, and will continue to enjoy, what *Ornis Fennica* has to offer. You are always welcome to contact me, to suggest new ideas, ask for advice or further information about the journal. I look forward to an ongoing discussion on how to best develop *Ornis Fennica*.

**Andreas Lindén**  
Editor-in-Chief