
EDITORIAL

In my June editorial, I asked, "How is *Blue Jay* doing?" I was pleased to receive letters about this question from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and Ontario. Here are a few of the responses:

"*Blue Jay* is a journal of natural history and conservation for Saskatchewan and adjacent regions. Its value lies not solely in serving members of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society (SNHS) as a source of enjoyment, entertainment, and education ... its value lies primarily in the accumulation of information. It should not aim to satisfy members. Members should feel good knowing that they ... are supporting a journal which is a source of information. Its value does not end when a member puts his copy down ... it sits in libraries where it is permanently available as a source of information. ... members get something out of it, varying with their interests, background, and experience; and those who contribute help stimulate and teach others. This is well and good, but it does not matter whether each and every member enjoys each and every article in each issue. That is a faulty premise, and I see great risk in this business of 'making *Blue Jay* a worthwhile journal for all Nature Saskatchewan members'." This excellent defense for the *Blue Jay* as a semi-scientific journal was written by a *Blue Jay* associate editor, Dr. Robert Nero of Winnipeg.

Robert goes on to state: "Getting 'scientists' to write for all *Blue Jay* 'subscribers' is somehow going out on a limb that will break off. ... As an informed and experienced member and reader of *Blue Jay* for several years, I have never tried to read everything that was in *Blue Jay*. I don't need to digest all the information about a technical article on moths, for example, to appreciate the long term value of that item. ... We need to remind folks that this is a function of the SNHS, to record what is sometimes

technical, difficult to read and in some cases not meant to be read. You don't need the moth article ... you have it there in print to be used by those who are interested in moths, whether SNHS members, university professors (here or overseas), etc."

Scott Bricker of St. Albert, Alberta, made the following comments: "The magazine maintains a good balance between the scientific and the 'lay,' between bugs, animals, flowers and birds. As a 'birder,' I don't get upset with non-bird articles. These remind me that not everything is 'strictly for the birds.' As they say in Ireland, 'You're doin' just foin'."

Tony Lang of Toronto: "I think you have made the right decision to work at striking a balance between scientific and non-scientific articles. *Blue Jay* needs both. ... *Blue Jay* provides a place in the open literature to which people all over the continent look for information on the natural history of the northern Prairies. ... While *Blue Jay* has a scientific responsibility, there is a real need to ensure that the journal is still accessible and interesting to members who are new or are not avid field naturalists. Having non-scientific articles and letters alongside the scientific articles fulfils part of this need. ... Maybe the 'Editorial Information' section could explicitly state that the authors of all articles are encouraged to make their articles readable by non-specialists. They could also be assured that this will not detract from the scientific value of the articles. ... taking a strong hand in the editing of already written articles would be time consuming. It might also deter submission of scientific articles because of the additional ... time that would be required before such articles are published."

The struggle to find a good balance will continue. My associate editors and I sincerely thank all who took time to send comments.