

# Editorial

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Dear LAJAM readership,

We are proud to present the first issue (Vol. 20 No. 1) of *LAJAM* for April 2025. This issue features four articles, five notes, and two *In Memoriam* pieces. We are especially encouraged to see contributions from several Latin American countries and a diversity of taxa, ranging from sea lions on Guadalupe Island, Mexico, to river dolphins in the Araguaia River, Brazil.

Several papers focus on the conservation status and biology of river dolphins in the genus *Inia*. The cover image by Fernando Farias captures *Inia araguaiaensis* performing a “burst” behavior—described in detail by Dalpaz & Simões-Lopes as a foraging strategy in which dolphins beach themselves to drive fish out of the water. The authors also report emerging conflicts between river dolphins and local fishers. Paschoalini Frias et al. interviewed riverside communities in the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve in central Amazon, finding that most respondents view dolphin-watching tourism as vital for the conservation of Amazon River dolphins. They emphasize the importance of maintaining ecological relationships between the dolphins and their environment for conservation success. Meanwhile, Roundtree et al. explore the use of passive acoustic monitoring to study both Amazonian dolphins and fish, offering insights into predator-prey dynamics through soundscape analysis.

Two contributions expand our knowledge of cetaceans in Peru and Ecuador. Alfaro-Shigeto et al. provide a comprehensive review of parasites and epizootics found in the genus *Delphinus* from both countries. Félix et al. report the first recorded sighting of a long-beaked common dolphin in Ecuador, potentially expanding its range by 2° of latitude, and highlight the threats imposed by fisheries interactions with the species.

Rio et al. describe the vocalizations of Risso’s dolphins from Baja California, Mexico, presenting the only acoustic study of this species in the North Pacific and joining a very limited body of literature on their whistle characteristics. On the Atlantic side of the continent, Lodi et al. present two case studies of anatomical deformities in the tail flukes of humpback whales off the southern coast of Brazil.

Two studies address status and abundance. Eloarriaga-Verplancken et al. evaluated the breeding season status of California sea lions on Guadalupe Island, Mexico. This is particularly important considering recent population declines of 50–75% at other Mexican rookeries despite federal protections. They report a relatively small population. On a more hopeful

note, Isabella et al. report a possible population recovery of giant otters in the Tauramena municipality of Colombia. Their surveys identify five unique family groups in a region where the species was believed to have been extirpated due to illegal hunting and the pelt trade.

Finally, we include *In Memoriam* tributes by Chapham et al. and May-Collado et al., honoring the late Oswaldo Ravelo and Eric Ramos, respectively. Both individuals made significant contributions to marine mammal research, particularly within Latin America and will be greatly missed. Eric was a member of our Editorial Board and a dear friend to many of us.

The *LAJAM* editorial team continues to undergo changes. In our previous issue, we announced that Dr. Eduardo Morteo was stepping into the role of Managing Editor. Unfortunately, that transition did not work out, and Dr. Daniel Gonzalez-Socoloske has resumed the role for the time being. We are also in the process of expanding our team of Associate Editors.

Publishing a quality peer-reviewed journal takes time and effort. All members of the Editorial Board, including both of us as Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief, are volunteers and do not receive any compensation for our work. In a recent contribution in *Science*, it was noted that Latin American journals are the standard for open access noncommercial journals, but visibility and indexing remain a struggle (Moutinho, 2024). Most commercial open-access journals charge authors an article processing charge (APC) of about \$1,000 USD to as much as \$10,000 USD to publish a paper! Journals that charge low APCs, referred to as standard model journals, are one alternative. However, we feel that charging any APC is a major obstacle for many researchers in the Global South and creates a barrier to science in Latin America. We are therefore committed to keeping *LAJAM* as a standard model journal, both open-access (no paywall) and free for authors (no APC). This model can only work if our scientific society (SOLAMAC) and our sponsors remain committed. We are very grateful that our primary sponsor YacuPacha continues to support our efforts and has recently renewed their sponsorship. As we continue to grow, that might add extra financial challenges.

We are continuing to explore indexing options, both international and regional to boost our visibility. This may require some changes like requiring all authors to submit ORCID numbers. Our journal is currently archived by the platform Open Journal Systems (OJS), which uses the Open Archives Initiative Protocol

for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH). This allows metadata harvesting by other systems and search engines like Google to increase discoverability. Since joining the OJS platform in 2014, our combined articles have averaged 2,000-3,000 views monthly. Since 2021, that average has increased to 4,000-6,000 monthly views.

We thank the authors for their contributions, and we encourage you to keep supporting *LAJAM*. We especially acknowledge the work of reviewers, so hard to find and engage recently, by all journals. Their contribution is invaluable to the growth of our scientific society and the quality level of our journal.

On a final note, Eric's recent premature death continues to be a very bitter pill to swallow and merits some self-reflection. Amid our ongoing scientific endeavors, we must not lose sight of a crisis that continues to unfold quietly, often in the shadows: the mental health struggles faced by many in our community. Depression, anxiety, and suicide are not abstract issues—they are deeply personal battles fought by people we know, love, and sometimes lose. It is time we speak openly and act intentionally. No one should face their pain alone. The best way to support each other is by listening and by advocating for more mental health services, which are often limited. There is strength in vulnerability, and immense courage in asking for (and offering) help. As a scientific community, we have a responsibility to create spaces where people feel safe, heard, and supported. Let us break the silence, reduce the stigma, and remind one another: you are not alone. You are valued. And there is always hope.

Sincerely,

*Daniel Gonzalez-Socoloske*  
Managing Editor

*Miriam Marmontel*  
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## References

Moutinho, S. (2024). Breaking the glass: Latin America is the leader in nonprofit open-access journals. But it struggles to give them visibility. *Science*, 386(6726), 1087-1089.