Lecture update procedure—2009

1. Select any topic of general relevance and importance to an undergraduate ornithology student and add something new from the very current literature. The idea is for you to take any important lecture topic and develop a written section that would be suitable to insert in a lecture on that topic. The new information should be fundamentally important or significant enough to warrant inclusion in a conceptually based lecture that all undergraduates who take ornithology should hear. Again, the idea is to pick a topic that has some new information that we should all know about. This is not a review of everything we know about a topic, it’s an update of the topic with new information, so one new paper is ok, but often there will be several if it’s an area of current research interest. The section should include (1) an introduction to the big issue (What’s the main lecture topic, and what specific related question does the research address?), (2) the nature of the experiment or observations associated with the research you wish to describe, including the conceptual design (with alternative outcomes and associated predictions), (3) the main results (and relevant figures) that emerge from the new research findings, (4) the overall conclusion or new synthetic understanding related to the issue, and (5) associated references.

2. Use Google Scholar and the Mansfield library web resources to conduct an electronic database search and get a handle on the recent literature (things published within the last year...yes, there’s plenty published in a single year). You might start with a search of recent articles in the journals listed in your handout.

3. Your synthesis should be presented as one coherent essay on the topic or issue of interest. This should be typed (double-spaced) in a Word document and submitted to me as a hard copy and also emailed to me (hutto@mso.umt.edu) as an electronic copy. We will provide a review so that you can re-write the section taking into account any editorial suggestions. You can then re-submit the edited version for re-grading; your point total will be the average of the two scores. There is no page limit, but it will probably take no more than 3 pages of text. This paper will be due no later than Friday, 6 March.

6. Grades will be based on how relevant, significant, and interesting the material is (10 points), how well the story is written (10 points) and synthesized (10 points) as part of an existing lecture topic, and how well you provided supplemental material (graphs or figures for a printed lecture handout or for a Powerpoint lecture presentation—5 points). Late papers will be docked 3 points per day.

HAVE FUN!