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The Journal of Search and Rescue (JSAR) is an open access peer-reviewed electronic journal for the collation and distribution of original scholarly material on search and rescue (SAR).

It is being supported by the in-kind work and contributions of the Editorial Board. There is still the need for a dedicated journal serving those with a direct interest in all disciplines of search and rescue including: rope rescue, water (flat, swift and marine), ice rescue, wilderness search and rescue, structural collapse rescue, trench collapse rescue, cave rescue, dive rescue, motor vehicle extrication, canine search, technical animal rescue, air rescue, search theory, search management, and mines rescue. JSAR exists to fulfil that need.

Article submissions from these and other SAR disciplines are welcome. Launching this journal on the internet offers a relatively cost-effective means of sharing this invaluable content. It affords the prompt publication of articles and the dissemination of information to those with an interest in SAR.

JSAR will provide a forum for the publication of original research, reviews and commentaries which will consolidate and expand the theoretical and professional basis of the area. The Journal is interested in theoretical, strategic, tactical, operational and technical matters.

Advertising within JSAR will be considered in the future to ensure sustainable funding is available to enhance and continue the work of the journal. The publication of an article in the Journal of Search and Rescue does not necessarily imply that JSAR or its Editorial Board accepts or endorses the views or opinions expressed in it.

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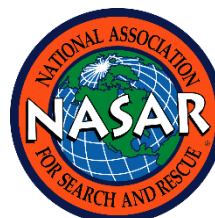
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## Editorial

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This issue of the Journal of Search and Rescue reflects a field increasingly concerned with the quality, transparency, and defensibility of decision-making under uncertainty. Across the contributions, a common thread emerges: search and rescue is not simply a matter of deploying effort, but of understanding where effort is most likely to matter, how confidence should be calibrated, and how operational decisions can be communicated, reviewed, and improved.

The issue brings together work on terrain-based reasoning, Bayesian search theory, probability-informed tasking, operational case analysis, professional coordination, and human-factors assurance. These contributions collectively point to a maturing SAR discipline in which search planning is becoming more explicit, evidence-informed, and auditable. Several papers address the practical use of probability concepts such as probability of area, probability of detection, probability of success, coverage, sweep width, and search effort. Importantly, they do so not as abstract mathematical constructs, but as operational tools for prioritising sectors, comparing search strategies, interpreting unsuccessful searches, and supporting decisions about re-search, resource substitution, continuation, or suspension.

A second theme is the translation of theory into practice. This issue shows that models and terminology only improve SAR outcomes when they are understood, consistently applied, and adapted to real operational conditions. Contributions from New Zealand and Mexico illustrate both the promise and the difficulty of this translation: practitioners bring substantial experience and sound operational judgement, but variations in terminology, spatial reasoning, cartographic practice, data capture, and training can constrain the effective use of search theory. These are not merely technical gaps; they are system-level issues that affect interoperability, assurance, and public confidence.

The letters to the editor extend this discussion by considering the professional and human foundations of SAR. They remind us that effective search depends not only on methods and tools, but also on coordination, competence, shared standards, cognitive resilience, and the ability to make reasoning visible during complex and time-pressured incidents. In this respect, the issue invites reflection on what the SAR community means by professionalism and assurance, and whether current systems adequately capture the judgement behind operational decisions.

Taken together, this issue offers a concise but significant contribution to the continuing development of SAR as an evidence-informed discipline. It does not suggest that probability, doctrine, or professionalisation can replace field expertise. Rather, it argues implicitly and persuasively that expertise is strengthened when supported by clear language, robust methods, calibrated uncertainty, disciplined coordination, and reflective learning. This is the continuing task for SAR research and practice alike.

A further strength of the collection is its measured pragmatism. The contributions acknowledge uncertainty, imperfect data, uneven capability, incomplete detection, and the practical constraints under which SAR teams operate. They resist the temptation to overclaim, offering instead methods, examples, concepts, and questions that can be tested, refined, and adapted. In doing

so, they reinforce the role of an applied academic journal in a practice-based field: to support rigorous inquiry while remaining close enough to operational reality to be useful.

On behalf of the *Journal of Search and Rescue*, I thank the authors, reviewers, and contributors whose work has made this issue possible. Their papers and letters advance an important conversation about the continuing development of SAR as both a practical craft and an evidence-informed discipline.

**Dr. Alun Newsome, Editor**