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| Editors in Chief in Food Webs  Prof Brandon Barton |  |
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| Zurich, Monday, 12 September, 2022 | |

Dear Professor Brandon Barton

This letter outlines the reasons for us submitting the manuscript “How many predator guts are required to predict trophic interactions?” for consideration as an *Original Research Article* in *Food Webs*. Below we outline the reasons as to why we believe this subject matter and the content of the manuscript will be attractive to readers of *Food Webs*, and more broadly, with reference to the criteria provided in the Author Guidelines.

*Of general interest to researchers working in the field of food web ecology:* Understanding ‘who eats whom’ is a key question in food web ecology. However, collecting and analysing interaction data such as predator guts to infer trophic interactions in a food web requires a large amount of time and effort. Therefore, one would be interested in knowing the minimum number of predator guts one needs to collect from the field to describe a food web structure with high precision and accuracy. In this submitted paper, we answer this question using a mechanistic food web model to predict food web structures for different amount of predator guts.

*Rule of thumb:* Our study provides an estimate of the minimum number of predator guts that need to be sampled to predict the structure of a food web using a food web model for an ecosystem with a given number of species or number of trophic links. This could lead to a reduction in the number of predator guts that would have been collected otherwise thereby saving considerable time and resources.

*Potential for stimulating further improvements:* Our study can be the foundation for further analysis that include other sources of food web data where missing information from a given source can be complemented by another. This can be further extended to other types of ecological networks as well.

We mention below the reviewers we would like to suggest along with the reasons why they are suitable:

* Samraat Pawar: Contributions in food webs
* Ulrich Brose: Contributions in allometric scaling in food webs
* Andrew Beckerman: Contributions in food webs

Thank you for taking the time to consider this manuscript.

Your Sincerely

Anubhav Gupta