

Ecology

Author Guidelines

17-21 minutes

Types of contributions

Ecology is publishing more concise papers than has been the tradition for this journal. Concise publications yield increased interest and allow a greater number of papers and topics to appear in the journal. The number and average length of Articles published in *Ecology* is decreasing, and the number of Reports is increasing.

Many publications conceived in the past as Articles now be presented as Reports, with an average length of 5-6 journal pages (20 manuscript pages). Our goal is to publish Reports within six months of submission. Articles and Concepts and Synthesis papers will continue to be published in *Ecology*, but these will be shorter than the average Article of the past with a target length of 15.0 typeset pages (30 manuscript pages).

Length limits with respect to manuscripts refer to all pages, including title page, text, literature cited, tables and figures. Manuscript length DOES NOT include Supporting Information. Lengths are calculated on manuscripts that adhere fully to our formatting guidelines:

- The manuscript text, literature cited, and all captions/footnotes are double-spaced at three lines per inch (12 lines/10 cm) in 12-point Times New Roman font.
- The abstract/introduction begins on a new page after the title page
- Each table and figure are on their own page
- Figure captions are presented in their own section
- There is a 1 inch (2.54-cm) margin on all sides of each page.
- Page size is Letter 8½" by 11".

Final decisions on article types are at the discretion of ESA. (i) Papers submitted/accepted as Reports that require more than 8.0 typeset pages (20 manuscript pages) in the final version will be published as Articles. (ii) Articles, Concepts and Synthesis, and Perspectives papers estimated to be longer than 15.0 typeset pages (30 manuscript pages) may be transferred to *Ecological Monographs* for publication.

- [Reports](#)
- [Statistical Reports](#)
- [Articles](#)
- [Concepts & Synthesis](#)
- [The Scientific Naturalist](#)
- [Special Features](#)
- [Forums](#)
- [Comments and Replies](#)
- [Data Papers](#)
- [Perspectives](#)

Reports

Reports are expected to disclose new and exciting work in a concise format. These papers should present results that substantially advance a field or overturn existing ideas. Accordingly, these papers will be given a prominent place near the start of the issue. We expect these will be the first papers readers turn to and that most readers will study at least the abstracts of all of them. To assure the contents are timely and to encourage submission of fast-breaking material, all submissions to the Reports section are given a fast-track for processing and publication. Our target is a rapid editorial decision and publication within ten weeks of acceptance.

As added incentives for authors to cast their submissions in the concise Reports format:

- All Reports will be freely available for no extra charge (i.e., one need not be a subscriber or have institutional access in order to view full text online).
- There will be no charge for color figures to authors of Reports.
- By making the Reports more accessible and visually appealing, we hope to increase our readership and cement *Ecology's* reputation as the place where authors publish the most important and exciting research findings in our science.
- In order to assure rapid publication, papers must conform to a strict page limit and format. Submissions may contain up to 20 manuscript pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, including everything from the title page through the last figure). The abstract can have a maximum of 200 words.

Statistical Reports

The primary goal of Statistical Reports is to increase the awareness and use of modern statistical techniques in the analysis of ecological data. Thus, Statistical Reports should be concise papers that illustrate how well-established, unfamiliar, or new statistical techniques can be applied to timely and interesting ecological questions. Statistical Reports should extend the boundaries of statistical methods and techniques normally used by ecologists, and should be presented in a way that promotes the continued evolution of good statistical practice by ecologists. Submissions may contain up to 20 manuscript pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, including everything from the title page through the last figure). The abstract can have a maximum of 200 words. Statistical Reports do not come with the same incentives as for Reports.

To encourage the broadest use by ecologists of methods and techniques published in Statistical Reports, all data and statistical code referred to in a Statistical Report must be archived as Supporting Information to the manuscript published on the journal platform (in Wiley Online Library). For new manuscript submissions as of 1-February-2021, authors must adhere to the [ESA Open Research Policy](#). Papers submitted prior to 1-Feb-2021, and revisions/accepted versions of these submissions, should continue to adhere to the policy in place at the time of the original submission, as shown in the Author Guidelines presented on this page.

Articles

While a Report is a concise scientific statement on a single simple topic, an Article tells a more complicated story with distinct components. The greater length of Articles relative to Reports must be justified by their greater complexity and appeal to a broad ecological audience. We are asking authors to submit shorter, better-organized pieces that make use of Wiley Online Library for digital publication of appendices and supplements. Submissions are encouraged to meet the target length for Articles of between 20 and 30 manuscript pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, including everything from the title page through the last figure). Longer submissions (those over 30 pages, but under a maximum allowable 50 pages) should be accompanied by a detailed justification for the length in the cover letter at the time of submission. Manuscripts longer than 50 pages may be considered for *Ecological Monographs*, at the editor's discretion. The abstract can have a maximum of 350 words.

If your Article exceeds 30 pages, you should include two numbered sections in your cover letter to justify the increased length: (*Section 1*) Clearly explain the contribution of the work to the broad field of ecology, including how it advances the field beyond an improved understanding of a particular habitat, taxon, or subfield and (*Section 2*) Clearly explain the value provided by the additional length and why this material cannot be adequately presented as Supplemental Material. Manuscripts with incomplete justifications may be rejected without further consideration.

Concepts & Synthesis

The Concepts and Synthesis section publishes papers that conceptually advance the field of ecology, including reviews that lead to a more synthetic overview of a subfield. These papers are expected to go well beyond works being reviewed and include discussion of new directions, new syntheses, and resolutions of old questions. Small groups of papers will also be considered. Longer submissions (those over 30 pages, but under a maximum allowable 50 pages) should be accompanied by a detailed justification for the length in the cover letter at the time of submission. The abstract can have a maximum of 350 words. If your Concepts & Synthesis manuscript exceeds 30 pages, you should include two numbered sections in your cover letter to justify the increased length: (*Section 1*) Clearly explain the contribution of the work to the broad field of ecology, including how it advances the field beyond an improved understanding of a particular habitat, taxon, or subfield and (*Section 2*) Clearly explain the value provided by the additional length and why this material cannot be adequately presented as Supplemental Material. Manuscripts with incomplete justifications may be rejected without further consideration.

The Scientific Naturalist

The natural history of organisms and the landscapes they inhabit has long been the foundation of ecology, evolution, and conservation. Natural history discoveries provide great insight into the ecology of organisms which can then be subsequently tested experimentally or modeled mathematically. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in scientific natural history and the larger questions that it raises. Natural history has had a long tradition of high quality writing and art and we are pleased to continue this tradition in *Ecology* with the series **The Scientific Naturalist**.

This series is intended to attract a wide audience by showcasing the natural history of particular organisms (their morphology and behavior, their life histories, their habitats, and their roles in food webs and ecosystems). The writing should be of high quality to appeal to both a scientific as well as an educated, non-scientific audience. Submissions about animals, plants, fungi, or microorganisms are all welcome. Submissions should consist of at least one striking, high-quality photo documenting some interesting or previously unknown aspect of an organism's life cycle or ecology, accompanied by an essay of no more than 1500 words total, explaining why it is scientifically interesting or significant. The entire paper (double spaced, from the title page to the last figure) should consist of no more than 12 manuscript pages. This will cover four pages in *Ecology*. Submissions will be reviewed based on equal consideration of the scientific interest and writing quality of the accompanying essay and the artistic quality and natural history significance of the photo.

The photo and essay should:

- Illustrate a rare, unusual, or fascinating organism, behavior, process, or other natural phenomenon that will inspire and engage us in natural history
- Describe something new or important in ecology, evolution, conservation, phenology, or human–environment interactions that challenges existing theories and points in new directions
- Represent a scientific “aha” or “wow” moment (“I didn’t know that!”) in your own research
- Raise open questions or generate new hypotheses

The text accompanying the photo should contain something new and should not just cover previously published work; on the other hand, the paper may be a good way to announce an observation that will lead to subsequent papers. The first one or two paragraphs should call the reader’s attention to the photo and paint a picture of the natural history observation it depicts and how you came to be at the right place to make this observation. By the third paragraph, you should begin to develop some wider background about the natural history. It is important that the observation not be a one-off sighting but instead indicate something distinctly new and important. In order to put the observation into a wider context, a maximum of 15 citations can be included, if necessary. In addition to the photo, a simple table or figure of data that points in the direction of new questions or plausibility of new hypotheses is strongly encouraged. The essay should conclude with some open questions or new hypotheses for further research that arise from this natural history observation. Statements of precedence (e.g., first report of X)

should be avoided.

For freely available examples, see the January issue of the current volume of *Ecology*. The submissions will be reviewed and edited for scientific content and the quality of the writing by an editorial board devoted solely to these notes. We will make every effort to provide a short turnaround time in reviewing submissions.

In order to assure rapid publication, papers must conform to a strict page limit and format. "The Scientific Naturalist" submissions may contain up to 12 manuscript pages (this will cover four typeset pages in *Ecology*). The manuscript text, literature cited, figure captions, and table captions/notes/footnotes must be double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font. Additional detailed methods can be presented in an appendix if needed. For new manuscript submissions as of 1-February-2021, authors must adhere to the [ESA Open Research Policy](#). For papers submitted prior to 1-Feb-2021, and revisions/accepted versions of these submissions, data archiving remains optional.

Special Features

Special Features are intended to address various aspects of a theme that is likely to be of broad interest to ecologists. Ideally, a feature should teach a large audience about an unfamiliar topic or an area in which there has been considerable recent progress, or it should cause the audience to re-examine an issue that is not as settled as most have presumed. Proposals for Special Features should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief.

There is essentially no limit to the topics for Special Features, so long as they fit within the broader scope and subject matter guidelines for *Ecology*. The key guideline for a Special Feature is that the papers address aspects of a topic or theme, and that this topic or theme is likely to be of broad interest to ecologists. For more information, see [here](#).

Forums

A Forum can take a number of forms but always includes a series of commentaries solicited from a number of experts. These commentaries represent personal responses to a paper (or papers) considered to be of very broad interest and significance within the field of applied ecology. Possible variations include, but are not limited to:

- An original (published for the first time) research, review, or discussion paper, followed by a number of commentaries,
- A paper republished (with permission) from another journal, followed by commentaries
- An ESA report, followed by commentaries,
- Several original papers on a common topic, followed by commentaries,
- A Special or Invited Feature, followed by several commentaries.

The number of commentaries can depend on the nature of the Forum, but normally would not exceed six to eight. The commentaries are reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC).

An individual interested in proposing a Forum should contact the EIC to discuss the idea. If the EIC believes the idea should be pursued, a short proposal must be submitted for review by one or more member of the Board of Editors.

- Comments should be brief; our absolute limit is 16 manuscript pages, including everything except for supporting information.
- The title of a Comment or Reply should be of the form "[Title of the original paper up to the first colon]: Comment."
- Comments may be assigned to a Subject-matter Editor for evaluation. As with regular articles, typically two reviews will be sought. Every effort will be made to expedite the review process.
- At the time a Comment is assigned to a Subject-matter Editor, the authors of the paper being commented upon will be offered the opportunity to submit a signed review to the Subject-matter Editor, which is supplemental to and not a replacement for the regular reviews. The signed supplemental review will be forwarded to the author(s) of the Comment, together with the two regular reviews and the Subject-matter Editor's decision letter.
- When the Comment is first sent to the authors of the manuscript being commented upon, they will be informed by receipt of this policy document that at such time as the Comment is accepted for publication, they will be sent a copy of the final version and will be invited by the Subject-matter Editor to prepare a response. This Reply must be completed within four weeks if

simultaneous publication is to be guaranteed. Authors should submit the response online and it will be sent to the same Subject-matter Editor who handled the Comment. The Reply will typically be reviewed by one reviewer, but the Subject-matter Editor may choose to accept the response without review in cases where the response is short and simple.

- We will attempt to publish all comments on a particular paper plus any response together. We generally neither invite nor publish responses to responses.

Data Papers

Data Papers should emphasize the collection, organization, synthesis, and thorough documentation of data sets of ecological value. By providing a peer-review process for Data Papers, ESA provides a high-profile outlet for data compilations and recognition for ecologists who create them. Only the abstract appears in Ecology; the data and metadata are available as Supporting Information in Wiley Online Library and for papers submitted prior to 1-February-2021 (and revisions/accepted versions of those papers) additional copies of the data set may be provided in data repositories. Papers submitted as of 1-February-2021 must adhere to the ESA open research policy available and make data available both as Supporting Information and on a repository. Special instructions for Data Papers explain how to prepare data and metadata. See [our instructions for preparing a Data Paper](#).

For new manuscript submissions as of 1-February-2021, authors must adhere to the [ESA Open Research Policy](#) which outlines that data associated with Data Papers published in Ecology must both be provided as Supporting Information to the paper on the journal's online platform available on a public repository. For papers submitted prior to 1-February-2021, and revisions/accepted versions of those papers, data archiving as Supporting Information is still required, and archiving on a public repository remains optional.

Perspectives

This section, prominently featured at the beginning of the issue, is intended to contain papers that provide synthetic overview, critical commentary, or historical perspective, primarily by eminent ecologists. The MacArthur Award lectures will be published in this section. Often these will be invited papers, but proposals for submitting a Perspectives paper will be considered. Such proposals should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief. Note that coauthored papers are not appropriate for this section.