**Cover Letter.** The cover letter should explain how the manuscript fits the scope of the journal, and more specifically how it advances the field, while having broad appeal. If the manuscript relates to any previous submission to an ESA journal, that must be explained as well. Longer submissions those between 30 and 50 manuscript pages) should be accompanied by a detailed justification for the length. There is a required text box for the cover letter. Uploading a cover letter as an attachment is optional.

Dr. Cottingham,

We are writing to submit the manuscript “Maintenance of community function through compensation breaks down over time in a desert rodent community” as a Report in *Ecology*. This manuscript provides a unique empirical perspective on how functional redundancy and niche complementary modulate the robustness of community function to species loss over long timescales. Specifically, we show that fluctuating environmental conditions cause functional redundancy to break down, leading to a decline in community-wide robustness to species loss. In contrast, long-term changes in community composition due to niche complementarity…community function depends on the long-term dynamics of competition and compensation under fluctuating environmental conditions. It advances key concepts and classic empirical results in ecology with a unique long-term, experimental perspective, and we hope it will be of interest to a wide array of ecologists with interests in competition, compensation, the maintenance of community function, and biodiversity change in the Anthropocene.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration,

Renata M. Diaz and S. K. Morgan Ernest