

## **Journal journeys: Building on our reputation in animal ecology with new ways to publish**

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As the Journal of Animal Ecology approaches its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we have been reflecting on the many seminal papers we have published that have given the journal its global reputation as the go-to place for discovering the best animal ecology research (see <https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/british-ecological-centenary-1913-2013-100-influential-papers/> for past papers that have influenced contemporary ecologists). Beyond our clearly influential Research articles, there is also an appetite for other article types by both authors and readers of the journal; many of the most read and cited articles in the journal in recent years are Reviews, Forum and 'How to...' papers. For example, the review of Allee effects in social species by Angulo et al. (2017) is one of the most read and the 'How to...' paper on social network analysis by Farine & Whitehead (2015) is one of the most cited. The challenge for the Editorial team has been to come up with new and exciting ways of engaging with the community of animal ecologists via new article types that continue to lead in the rapidly changing publishing world whilst ensuring our priorities continue to align with our 90-year heritage. In essence, how do we continue publishing 'the best animal ecology research that develops, tests, and advances broad ecological principles'?

We are therefore pleased to announce some significant changes to the types of articles that we publish. First, we are introducing 'Concepts in Animal Ecology' as a way of publishing new ideas and perspectives on emerging topics, or indeed revisiting and reinterpreting some classical concepts using new methods, data, and/or technologies. For example, this might be an idea on how advances in ecological genomics will change our understanding of animal fundamental and realised niches. These are shorter essays that are intended to be thought-provoking but could also be controversial perspectives on contemporary ideas in animal ecology. Second, 'Long-term Studies in Animal Ecology' will replace our former 'Synthesis' article type to provide balanced, comprehensive, and concise syntheses

of well-established field or laboratory study systems that reflect the heritage of seminal papers published in the journal. For instance, this article type could be a synthesis of ecological insights provided by a long-term study of marked individual colonial seabirds, corals, or ant colonies. Generally these articles consider studies that have been running for around 10 years, however clearly a study on an insect system generates more data over a shorter time period than one on a large mammal so we are flexible with what we will consider as a long-term study. We would like to acknowledge and highlight both the difficulties faced by ecologists in maintaining long-term studies and their importance to science, policy, and wider society. Central to the success of these articles will be a focus on future research directions and/or paradigm shifts enabled by dedicated investigation of a study system over the long term. Third, we have refreshed our other article types and are especially eager to publish more Reviews. Early career researchers, for example, may be well placed to write an in-depth synthesis that advances ecological thinking following a focussed piece of research. Indeed, early career ecologists can be nominated for the Sidnie Manton Award if they publish either a Review or a Long-term Studies in Animal Ecology paper in the journal, or the Elton Prize for best Research paper. Lastly, we would like to remind our readership that 'Forum' articles are encouraged across all BES journals. These are short communications presenting opinions on, or responses to, material published in the journal. They should be timely responses to an original article and could include reanalysis of the data, for example. We very much encourage the animal ecology community to use this article type to stimulate debate.

To make these changes a success, we have appointed a Commissioning Editor and are pleased to announce that Dr. [Rob Salguero-Gómez](#) joined the team in June 2021. Rob is based in the Department of Zoology at the University of Oxford and has served as an Associate Editor of the journal since 2019. More recently, he was one of the Guest Editors of the joint Special Feature on Ecological Resilience, in conjunction with the Journal of Ecology. Rob will take a proactive role in making our new article types a success and we have some immediate plans for 'How to...', 'Concepts in Animal Ecology' and 'Long-term Studies in Animal Ecology' papers to help potential authors visualise these formats. Authors are encouraged to approach him with ideas for any of the above article types, in any area of the journal scope. We find that these generally tend to be more highly cited than traditional research

articles and, whilst these articles are subject to our usual peer review process, Rob is keen to work with authors during the presubmission stage to help ensure that their ideas are suitable for the journal.. He has also identified some publication priorities: 'How to' articles on (1) disentangling trade-offs from density-dependence, (2) choosing the appropriate kind of phylogenetic analysis for different animal ecology questions, and (3) usage of fast, reliable, novel technologies for ecological monitoring and forecast; 'Concepts in Animal Ecology' articles on (4) human wild-life conflicts, (5) the role of functional traits in animal ecological systems, and (6) multiple drivers of animal senescence; and 'Long-term Studies' in (7) corals, and (8) insects, as well as (9) deep-time impacts on current animal biodiversity. He plans on using social media, and online (as well as eventually physical) conferences to engage with our readership. He is particularly interested in the submission of articles in these categories by under-represented groups, in pace with efforts by the BES to continue to improve diversity in ecology. Emilie Aimé (Senior Managing Editor) and Samantha Ponton (Assistant Editor) recently joined the Editorial Office and will also be pleased to discuss any pre-submission enquiries ideas authors might have.

We believe this is an exciting time for authors and readers of the journal as we take a forward-thinking approach to more relevant article types and the active commissioning of papers of broad appeal to animal ecologists. We look forward to discussing your ideas with you.

## References

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