

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 90th 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...’ papers 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* 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. An example of this might be how advances in ecological genomics are changing our understanding of animal fundamental and realised niches. *Concepts* articles are shorter essays that are intended to provide thought-provoking or potentially controversial new perspectives on contemporary ideas in animal ecology. **This is the author manuscript accepted for publication and has undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as [doi: 10.1111/1365-2656.13622](https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2656.13622)**

Second, *Long-term Studies* has replaced 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 in the field. 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 decades, however clearly a study on a short-lived insect system generates more data over a shorter time-period than one on a long-lived large mammal, so there is some flexibility with what we will consider as a long-term study. With this article type, we would like to acknowledge and highlight both the difficulties faced by ecologists in maintaining long-term studies and celebrate their importance to science, policy, and wider society. Central to the success of these articles is 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, with *How to* articles being renamed as *Research Methods Guides*, and we 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* 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 recently 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 our sister journals, *Journal of Ecology* and *Functional Ecology*. Rob will take a proactive role in making our new article types a success, and we have some immediate plans for commissioning *Research Methods Guides*, *Concepts* and

Long-term Studies 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 pre-submission stage to help ensure that their ideas are suitable for the journal. He has also identified some initial publication priorities: *Research Methods Guides* 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 forecasting; *Concepts* articles on (4) human-wildlife conflicts, (5) the role of functional traits in animal ecological systems, and (6) multiple drivers of animal senescence; *Long-term Studies* in (7) corals, and (8) insects; and *Reviews* on (9) deep-time impacts on current animal biodiversity. He plans on using social media, and 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) are our in-house Editorial Office team 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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