

Ecology

Submission Types

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Summary of Length Limits by Submission Type

Submission Type	Manuscript page length limit*	Abstract required?	Abstract length (words)	Key words required?	Additional Requirements
Article	30 [†]	Yes	350	Yes	N/A
Comment	16	No	N/A	No	N/A
Commentary	16	No	N/A	No	By invitation only
Concepts & Synthesis	30 [†]	Yes	350	Yes	N/A
Data Paper	See Data Paper guidelines	Yes	150 or 500 (see Data Paper guidelines)	Yes	See Data Paper guidelines
Introduction	5	No	N/A	No	By invitation only
Perspective	30	Yes	350	Yes	By invitation only
Reply	16	No	N/A	No	By invitation only
Report	20	Yes	200	Yes	N/A
Statistical Innovations**	30	Yes	200	Yes	N/A
The Scientific Naturalist	12	No	N/A	Yes	N/A

*See our complete [manuscript preparation guidelines \(PDF\)](#) for instructions on calculating manuscript length. The page count includes all pages (title page, body, References section, figures, figure captions, tables, and table captions) and does not include supporting information. Please see each manuscript type's description below for specifics regarding length.

[†]See the specific section below for this manuscript type regarding manuscripts over 30 pages.

**Previously Statistical Reports

Submission Types

Article

This section is intended for original research articles. Papers in this section generally consist of an Introduction, Methods/Materials, Results, and Discussion, and often contain tables and figures. An Article tells a more complicated story with distinct components than papers in our Reports section, while a Report is the suggested format for a concise scientific statement on a single simple topic. The greater length of Articles relative to Reports must be justified by their greater complexity and appeal to a broad ecological audience. Authors should strive to submit short, well-organized text, with judicious use of display items (tables; figures) and appendices.

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.

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. The longer the paper, the greater the pressure for a general framing that will be of interest to all ecologists and for more space devoted in the cover letter to explaining why the extra length is needed.

Comment

A Comment points out errors of fact or interpretation in an article that was previously published in *Ecology*. Comments that point out errors of fact or interpretation in an important article or book that is the basis for numerous articles being published in *Ecology* may also be considered. See our [guidelines for Comments \(PDF\)](#) for more information.

Reply

A Reply is submitted after invitation from the journal's editorial staff in response to a Comment by the author of the manuscript that was commented upon. In order to submit a Reply, this author must have previously submitted a signed review of the Comment. See our [guidelines for Replies \(PDF\)](#) for more information.

Concepts & Synthesis

The Concepts & 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. 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.

If your 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 longer the paper, the greater the pressure for a general framing that will be of interest to all ecologists and for more space devoted in the cover letter to explaining why the extra length is needed.

Small groups of papers will also be considered; see the [Special Features section](#) for information on groups of papers.

Data Paper

Data Papers are a unique type of manuscript published in *Ecology*, designed to enrich the global ecological and scientific community through the sharing of data to be reused, reanalyzed, and remixed

for advancing knowledge beyond its original purpose. Data Paper submissions should be noteworthy in impact and scope with a clear ecological application. Secondary data (i.e., data compiled from other published sources) is encouraged if it represents a significant, innovative, or creative contribution.

Data Papers are subject to full peer review. The review process will evaluate ecological significance and overall quality first, with further technical review to ensure a high standard of usability, especially with respect to associated metadata.

Submissions received **through Spring 2026** follow a metadata template established by Michener et al. ([1997](#)).

Submissions received **after Spring 2026** follow updated data and metadata standards.

Complete guidelines are available on the [Ecology Data Papers hub](#).

Perspective

This section, prominently featured at the beginning of an issue, is intended for papers that provide a synthetic overview, critical commentary, or historical perspective, and are primarily written by an eminent ecologist.

- The MacArthur Award lectures are published in this section.
- Coauthored papers are generally not appropriate for this section.
- Perspectives papers are generally invited papers, but proposals for submitting a paper will be considered. Proposals should be sent to the [Editor-in-Chief](#).

Report

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.

As an added incentive for authors to cast their submissions in the concise Reports format, all Reports are freely available for no extra charge (i.e., one need not be a subscriber or have institutional access to view full text online) but note the author is still responsible for page charge fees or an open-access publication fee.

Statistical Innovations

Statistical Innovations articles detail significant and broadly applicable developments of modern statistical techniques focused on timely and interesting ecological questions. The primary goal of Statistical Innovations is to increase the awareness and use of new and advanced approaches to the analysis of ecological data.

Statistical Innovations manuscripts should be written for a general ecological audience, illustrating how well-established, unfamiliar, or new statistical techniques can be applied within an ecological framework. Statistical Innovations articles extend the boundaries of traditional statistical methods and techniques normally used by ecologists and should be presented in a way that promotes the continued evolution of good statistical practice. In most cases, Statistical Innovations articles should contain empirical (and not just simulated) data. Formatting for Statistical Innovations follows the guidelines for Articles.

Additional requirements for Statistical Innovations

To encourage the broadest uptake of the methods published as Statistical Innovations, submissions of this type must have all code and data associated with the manuscript provided for review in an external repository at the manuscript submission stage, in addition to being formally archived upon acceptance. Please see our [Open Research policy](#) for more information.

This article type used to be called Statistical Reports.

The Scientific Naturalist

This series highlights the natural history of particular organisms, including their morphology and behavior, their life histories, their habitats, their roles in communities, food webs, and ecosystems, and other aspects. The natural histories of organisms and the communities, ecosystems, and landscapes they inhabit is the foundation of ecology, evolution, and conservation. The implications of these observations can then be subsequently tested experimentally or modeled mathematically. 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 Scientific Naturalist”.

Please see our [complete overview of “The Scientific Naturalist” \(PDF\)](#) for full submission guidelines.

Special Features and Forums

Special Features and Forums are groups of papers intended to address various aspects of a theme that is likely to be of broad interest to ecologists. Ideally, the group of papers 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 reexamine an issue that is not as settled as most have presumed. Proposals for Special Features and Forums should be addressed to the [Editor-in-Chief](#).

There is essentially no limit to the topics for Special Features and Forums, so long as they fit within the broader scope and subject matter guidelines for *Ecology*. The key guideline is that the papers address aspects of a topic or theme that is likely to be of broad interest to ecologists.

Special Feature and Forum submissions must be approved prior to manuscript submission. In ScholarOne, these manuscripts are submitted as any of the standard paper types (See “Submission Types” earlier in this document) or one of the Special Feature-specific types below. When submitting, the appropriate Special Feature or Forum must be selected in the designated field. For more information, see our complete overview of Special Features and Forums.

Introduction

This is a specific paper type to be included only within invited Special Features and Forums, and it should be submitted by invitation only.

Commentary

This is a specific paper type to be included only within invited Special Features and Forums, and it should be submitted by invitation only.

Commentaries represent personal responses to a paper (or papers) or to a concept considered to be of very broad interest and significance within the field of applied ecology.