

## EDITORIAL

# The times they are a-changin': evolution and revolution in animal ecology publishing

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This is a time of great change, not just for *Journal of Animal Ecology*, but also for publishing in general. Traditional 'legacy' publishing practices are being challenged by alternative models, including the open-access 'author-pays' model, which is gaining momentum in the UK and USA particularly (Vollmer 2013). In addition, the rapid development of digital technologies has opened up many exciting new opportunities for presenting and disseminating research. Such changes can present risks as well as possibilities, but it is important that our journal is responsive to change in this dynamic environment and we have tried to ensure that *Journal of Animal Ecology* is at the leading edge of these trends, where possible.

First, on the open-access front, one positive development is that the Journal now enjoys a well-established and successful partnership with Wiley's open-access journal *Ecology and Evolution* ([http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10-1002/\(ISSN\)2045-7758](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10-1002/(ISSN)2045-7758)), co-edited by one of our former Associate Editors, Andrew Beckerman. We often receive excellent, scientifically sound papers that nevertheless do not receive sufficient support to make it into JAE due to the current degree of competition. It is always hard to turn away these good papers, but as a result of this partnership, we can offer authors the option to have their manuscript and reviews forwarded to *Ecology and Evolution*, along with an offer of a reduced Article Processing Charge (APC). Of course, *Journal of Animal Ecology* is also fully compliant with the RCUK mandate, and we have a gold open-access system, called OnlineOpen, which enables authors to (for a charge) to make their articles free for readers to access, for a charge. Open access is certainly something we wish to encourage, and British Ecological Society (BES) members receive a considerable discount on the APC when choosing the OnlineOpen option.

Also in the spirit of transparency and openness, much attention has been placed recently on data sharing and archiving, and the benefits that this can bring in terms of maximizing the value and impact of hard-won data to

benefit both the authors and the wider ecological community. We have taken great strides to embrace this new initiative, and for authors of papers submitted from January 2014 onwards and subsequently accepted in the Journal, it will be compulsory to archive data and models relating to their papers in a public digital repository. We believe this is a positive step in making our science more robust, open and transparent. To facilitate this, along with the other BES journals, we have successfully integrated *Journal of Animal Ecology* with *Dryad*. For authors who choose to deposit their data in this repository, as many have done, the charges are currently sponsored by the BES. Of course, other data archives are available to authors, including *figshare*, *Treebase*, *NERC Data Centre* and *GenBank*, should authors prefer.

In recent times, we have also thought a lot about the online presentation of research published in the Journal. In order to reach a wider audience, we have expanded our presence on the social media channels *Facebook* and *Twitter* and have tried to make our website more dynamic and interactive. To this end, we have increased the output of multimedia, such as videos and podcasts, to provide a range of platforms for authors to provide insights into their research and to explain its wider implications. From the feedback we have received so far, we believe that such media have the potential to not only disseminate research to time-constrained ecologists, but also to help explain and popularise animal ecology beyond the boundaries of academia. We welcome your thoughts on this.

Such added value is important, but scientific content is the lifeblood of the Journal, and we are extremely pleased with the quality of the papers we published in 2013. This included seven *Review* papers, and another of our unique instructional *How to* papers: 'Quantifying individual variation in behaviour: mixed-effect modelling approaches', by Niels Dingemanse and Ned Dochtermann (Dingemanse & Dochtermann 2013). We are also publishing our very first *Synthesis* paper, entitled 'Insights into population ecology from long-term studies of red grouse *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*' by Martínez-Padilla and colleagues (Martínez-Padilla *et al.* 2014), which provides an excellent review of the trajectory and impact of long-term red

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grouse studies in population ecology. This *Synthesis* is the first of a new type of *Journal of Animal Ecology* paper, which aims to provide a balanced, comprehensive and concise overview of well-established field or laboratory study systems, targeted at a broad ecological audience. We believe these will be a useful up-to-date resource, not only for academic researchers and practitioners, but also for those of us who teach contemporary ecology. We welcome your suggestions for other *Synthesis* papers – please just email your proposal to the Executive Editor.

Last year also saw our first venture into the world of Special Features – collections of original research papers that share a common ecological theme, allowing us to present cutting-edge thinking in exciting and fast-moving fields. We published a Special Feature on ‘Location-only and use-availability data: analysis methods converge’, guest edited by our Associate Editor Bryan Manly and colleagues Lyman McDonald, Wayne Thogmartin and Falk Huettmann. The initial idea for this Special Feature came from a symposium on this topic at a meeting of the Wildlife Society in Kona, Hawaii, in 2011. The remit of the Special Feature was to compare and contrast methods that have been developed for modelling the geographical distribution of species (with location-only data) with methods that have been developed for modelling habitat selection by animals (with use-availability data). These seven thought-provoking papers conclude that the modelling of the geographical distribution of species and the modelling of habitat selection by animals are essentially tackling the same problem in terms of data analysis and can benefit from each other’s insights. We have a number of other Special Features already in the pipeline, but please get in touch if you have any suggestions.

Virtual Issues are web-only collections of papers previously published in BES journals. These were also the key features of 2013, with three issues, published in collaboration with the other BES journals: one, published in April, highlighted recent winners of the ‘BES Young Investigator Prizes’; a second, published in August on ‘Freshwater Ecology’, edited by Paul Raven; and a third, coinciding with the INTECOL meeting in London, celebrated ‘International Collaboration’ in ecological research. The final Virtual Issue of the year, edited by Ken Wilson, is called ‘Out of Africa’ and highlights the excellent scientific research published in *Journal of Animal Ecology* that has come out of this continent. We have a number of other Virtual Issues planned for 2014, so keep an eye on the website for these.

The 11th International Congress of Ecology (INTECOL) coincided with the British Ecological Society’s centenary celebrations and was a great success. Many of our authors, Associate Editors and Editors presented their research at this vibrant and stimulating meeting. The Journal also had an important presence at the meeting, sponsoring a symposium entitled ‘Multilevel transmission

processes in disease transmission: blending models and data’. Not only did two of our Editors (Mike Boots and Ken Wilson) organize and present their work at the symposium, but also a third (Tim Coulson) chaired the session. The Journal hopes to sponsor similar events in future.

During this period of change, some things remain. The Journal continues to be a forum for the publication of top-quality ecological science, and we continue to receive many more excellent submissions than we can possibly hope to publish; thus, our rejection rates are increasing, and currently stand at over 80%. We therefore encourage authors to consult our *Aims and Scope* prior to submission to ensure that their paper is a good fit for the Journal. This is important not only to save the time of Editors and reviewers, but it will also reduce the chances of delays in the publication of your research. A robust and critical reviewing process is important for our Journal to maintain its high standards and international reputation, which is especially important when the number of alternative ‘author-pays’ journals is increasing. Of course, with such a high rejection rate, we disappoint many of our prospective authors, and the line between acceptance and rejection can be rather thin and to some extent subjective. But we have an excellent board of Associate Editors with a broad range of experience, and a reliable pool of reviewers, so we hope we do not make too many mistakes. As mentioned earlier, when we receive papers that do not quite meet our stringent criteria, we now have the option to refer authors to *Ecology and Evolution*, which provides another high-quality location for their published work.

### Looking forward to 2014

As illustrated by the presentations at INTECOL, ecology in general, and animal ecology in particular, is an extremely vibrant and important science. Whilst *Journal of Animal Ecology* primarily focusses on publishing high-quality papers that help to develop and test fundamental ecology theory, many of our papers also have considerable applied impact, covering areas such as conservation biology, wildlife diseases, harvesting strategies, pest management, climate change and so on. We will continue to publish the best papers in our core areas of population ecology, community ecology, demography, life histories, trophic interactions, etc., but would also like to encourage more papers in growth areas, such as the application of new molecular methods to animal ecology (e.g. next-generation sequencing); urban ecology; ecosystem and landscape ecology; wildlife disease ecology; and the use of novel technologies for tracking animals in time and space (portable data loggers, remote sensing, large data, new analytical methods). To facilitate this, we will continue to commission and support Special Features, Virtual Issues, *Reviews*, *How to* papers and *Forum* articles that address these and other emerging areas of animal ecology.

## PERSONNEL CHANGES

As we begin a new year, the journal will see a number of significant personnel changes. Tim Coulson has now formally concluded his highly successful tenure as Executive Editor, during which the journal received its highest impact factor for many years, and will continue for the next 3 years as a Senior Editor. When Tim took on the Executive Editor role in February 2011, he continued to refine the scope of the journal to ensure that we were best serving the evolving needs of the broad range of animal ecologists. Thus, the journal has recently tended to move away from single-species studies that report the behaviour, ecology or life history of individual species, which would be more at home in the specialist literature. These are increasingly being replaced by the papers that develop new ecological theory that can then be tested with robust ecological data sets, generating novel and thought-provoking papers. Tim was also instrumental in promoting the *How to* series of papers, which we believe is a valuable information source for ecologists looking to develop new techniques and models.

Taking over the reins from Tim is Ken Wilson. Ken has been a Senior Editor since May 2009 and was an Associate Editor with the Journal for 2 years prior to this. His research interests are broad-ranging, though he specializes in the evolutionary ecology of host–parasite interactions. His research at Lancaster University encompasses both laboratory and field-based studies, on taxa from invertebrates to birds and mammals, and is generally aimed at challenging theory with data. Ken aims to continue the good work of his predecessors as Executive Editor in a period of great change in both publishing and science. He is particularly keen to attract the best papers in the emerging disciplines outlined above, to make the Journal more accessible to all of its readers via new developments in media such as social media, to reduce publishing times further and to ensure that *Journal of Animal Ecology* is the premier location for animal ecologists to publish their best research.

In addition, after 9 years as a Senior Editor on the Journal, during which he served as Executive Editor for 3 years, Graeme Hays will sadly be stepping down. Graeme can take much credit for increasing the Journal's standing in the marine ecology community and also was responsible for implementing the *In Focus* section as a regular feature of the journal. Fortunately for us, we are not losing Graeme's extensive experience and intimate knowledge of the journal, as he has agreed to stay on our editorial board as an Associate Editor with special responsibility for the *In Focus* section.

This latter switch occurs in the wake of Corey Bradshaw leaving his role as *In Focus* Editor at the end of 2013, though we are very pleased that he will also remain on the editorial board, as an Associate Editor. We would like to thank Corey for the tremendous amount of hard work he has put in to commissioning and promoting the

*In Focus* articles and making this section one of the most popular features of the Journal. A core tenet of the *Journal of Animal Ecology* ideology is that we publish papers that are of interest to a broad audience of ecologists, and the *In Focus* section plays a key role in highlighting the wider significance of our papers. We are sure that Graeme will continue to commission thought-provoking commentaries to maintain the success of this feature.

Replacing Graeme as a Senior Editor is Ben Sheldon. Ben is the Director of the Edward Grey Institute in the Zoology Department at Oxford University. He has broad interests in evolutionary biology, ecology and behavioural ecology and most of his work uses birds as model organisms. He is particularly interested in the ecological and evolutionary causes of variation in natural populations, and in utilizing experimental manipulation with analysis of long-term data sets. He has published over 180 papers and has extensive editorial experience and will make a very welcome addition to the editorial team, starting in January 2014.

We also say goodbye to Associate Editors Ian Hardy (University of Nottingham, UK), Bryan Manly (WEST Inc., USA), Guy Woodward (Imperial College London, UK), Lennart Persson (Umeå University, Sweden) and Dan Tompkins (Landcare Research, NZ) who have served the journal fantastically well over many years; we are greatly appreciative of their contribution to the Journal. This, in turn, allows us to welcome a number of new Associate Editors to the board, who will take up their posts over the coming few months or have recently started. These include Guarino Colli (University of Brasília, Brazil), Eoin O'Gorman (Imperial College London, UK), Sonia Altizer (University of Georgia, USA), Dylan Childs (University of Sheffield, UK), Dehua Wang (Chinese Academy of Sciences, China), Luca Börger (Swansea University, UK), Spence Behmer (Texas A&M University, USA), Kate Jones (UCL & ZSL, UK), Andy Fenton (University of Liverpool, UK), Priyanga Amarasekare (UCLA, USA), Christophe Eizaguirre (QMUL, UK) and Alice Hughes (Chinese Academy of Sciences, China). We are always on the lookout for dynamic new Associate Editors with a broad range of interests across animal ecology and a strong publication and reviewing record. If you think you qualify and would be interested in joining us at *Journal of Animal Ecology*, please email the Editorial Office with your CV and a brief cover letter and we will contact you if and when a suitable position arises.

## ISSUE 1

So finally, to introduce the first issue of 2014. This is led by Graeme Hays' *In Focus* article (Hays 2014), which highlights Klassen *et al.*'s study 'When and where does mortality occur in migratory birds? Direct evidence from long-term satellite tracking of raptors' (Klaassen *et al.* 2014). The authors use satellite telemetry to describe when

and where migratory raptors die during the annual cycle, finding that daily mortality is substantially higher during migration than during stationary periods (breeding and wintering), but total mortality is surprisingly equal between seasons, as shorter 'dangerous' migration periods are offset by longer 'safe' stationary periods.

In addition to the customary array of stimulating *Standard Papers*, we are excited that this issue also contains our second Special Feature, on *Metabolic Ecology* Humphries & McCann (2014), guest edited by Associate Editor Murray Humphries (McGill University, Canada) and former *Journal of Animal Ecology* Senior Editor Kevin McCann (University of Guelph, Canada). This feature is an international collaboration: consisting of six invited contributions from researchers studying the roles of metabolism in ecology across different levels of ecological organization. Accompanying it is a systematic review and bibliometric analysis conducted by the guest editors, which in addition to posing the major challenges in metabolism research, neatly ties together the rest of the Special Feature (Humphries & McCann 2014).

We believe that this strong opening issue of the Journal will mark the beginning of a stimulating volume of papers, which we hope our readers enjoy as much as we did. Happy New Year!

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