

Editorial—New JEB managing Editor and updates to editorial procedures

An indeed 'crazy' year has come to a close, also for the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of the *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* (henceforth 'JEB' in short). Although the pandemic seems to have slowed down many aspects of our daily lives, other matters nevertheless continue to function in the background: things such as peer review, the hallmark of scientific publishing, which of course can be, and often is and was, performed in the home office, online. Consequently, our little scientific ivory tower planet continues to revolve, and 2020 in fact turned out to be a year of marked changes for our journal's organization with many updates to our procedures to benefit our authors. The major theme guiding us along our path was to tighten the mutual support between the *European Society of Evolutionary Biology* (ESEB) and their flagship journal.

A long-planned move was our recent appointment (in mid-2020) of a Managing Editor for JEB that is based within the ESEB organization. Thus, I am very happy to welcome *Dr. Nicola ('Nicki') Cook* in this role, a young evolutionary biologist from Scotland. Nicki has also taken on the role of Publicity Officer and is working to raise the profile of JEB. She works mainly from home but with a connection to the University of St. Andrews. We believe that a scientist taking on the role of Managing Editor streamlines the progress of manuscripts through the editorial pipeline from submission to decision and promotion. This editorial structure also strengthens the links between ESEB and JEB.

Given the major ongoing shifts in scientific publishing at large (I merely mention *PlanS*), in 2019 we introduced JEB's new Forum section with the publication of Meirmans et al. (2019), a discursive of how science should be funded (<https://doi.org/10.1111/jeb.13497>). This section of our journal serves as a home for papers concerning science policy and related matters of interest to scientific societies and the evolutionary biology community as a whole. In 2020 we published a Target Review by Price et al. (2020) on gene drive systems (<https://doi.org/10.1111/jeb.13693>) linked to a recent Progress Meeting. These two connected initiatives are regularly funded by ESEB and were implemented a few years ago by previous EiCs *Mike Ritchie* and *Allen Moore*. In addition, at the last ESEB conference in Turku I had called for more Special Issues in JEB, picking up on hot topics presented and discussed at the ESEB congresses and elsewhere. I am happy to report that we have several such Special Issues in the pipeline at the moment with a number of guest editors. Three are forthcoming: *Virus evolution*, *Genetics & genomics of*

adaptation and *Assortative mating in labile traits*. *Speciation in marine environments*, a Special Issue resulting from a conference symposium, appeared early in 2021. See https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14209101/homepage/Journal_of_Evolutionary_Biology_Call_for_Papers.html for further information on some of these. We believe that tighter links between ESEB conferences and the society's journal(s) are desirable in general. In thinking so, I have the great success and impact of the *American Zoologist* in mind, a society-run journal later called *Integrative & Comparative Biology* that still exists today. In the second half of the 20th century, this was a very influential and well-cited journal dedicated exclusively to publishing Special Issue proceedings of an associated major conference. Herewith, I invite members of the evolutionary biology community to suggest and guest edit further Special Issues for JEB to bring together research on topical issues. I also reiterate our call for submissions of Review papers and contributions to our Forum section. Another innovation by our new Managing Editor has been to set up the JEB blog (<https://jevbio.net>). This developing site will give us, our editors and authors, as well as ESEB members and leadership, space to present and discuss topical issues surrounding the journal and the society.

By now well-discussed—and well-advanced—is the ongoing Open Science, Open Access, Open Data, open everything-in-science movement. ESEB has assembled an advisory group to appraise the consequences of the ongoing worldwide restructuring of science production, dissemination and publication for the very special situation of society journals such as JEB. In contrast to a 'commercial' scientific journal, we not only need to support authors, reviewers and publishers, but also the membership and activities of a scientific society (here ESEB). In parallel, the EiCs of the major evolutionary society journals are in contact, discussing and coordinating the similar issues affecting them all. A related matter of continued debate is the rising incidence of (accusations of) scientific misconduct of various sorts, which discredits science and scientists as such, and which has recently affected our field of evolutionary ecology. In response, JEB has updated their guidelines for dealing with such situations, modelled after those of a nonprofit group on publication ethics called COPE (<https://publicationethics.org/>), and formed an ad hoc investigation committee of editors to examine specific acute cases. One possible resolution I prefer is to keep the discussion in-house in form of a scientific debate with written challenges, responses and

commentaries on particular disputed papers, rather than issuing uncontrollable social media witch hunts.

In line with many other (society) journals, and responding to a worldwide push for Open Data, for over 10 years now JEB has encouraged the publication of the data associated with published papers. As of the end of 2020, we now mandate the publication of data underlying the results of manuscripts published in JEB (unless the data may not be published for ethical reasons). JEB maintains a subscription to Dryad (datadryad.org) such that there is no financial barrier to any author(s) placing their data in a public repository. Dryad accepts a myriad of data types and as such is a suitable repository for the varied data produced by the evolutionary biology community. To recognize the commitment of our authors to Open Research practices, JEB now offers Open Research Badges in association with the Centre for Open Science. Three badges are available to acknowledge our authors' commitment to Open Data, Open Materials and Preregistration, respectively. As we now mandate Open Data at JEB, virtually all of our authors will be eligible for the Open Data badge. Read more about this initiative here: <https://www.cos.io/initiatives/badges>.

At the present time, we mandate the deposition of data at the point of acceptance. The editorial board is currently discussing the co-submission with every paper of the data file and any corresponding statistical code. This would mean that there is at least the option for editors and reviewers to examine these, if required, during the review process. This is not suggesting that reviewers re-run all analyses in order to evaluate a study; it is probably sufficient that they can. It is our hope that this further move towards fully Open Science will help to head off the very few incidences of scientific misconduct prior to publication.

A further part of the Open Science discussion is 'Open Review'. Whilst double-blind peer reviewing will stay for the moment due to popular demand, open (i.e. nonanonymous) reviewing is debated among our editors and authors. JEB is currently participating in a Peer Review Transparency Pilot; authors are asked at the point of submission whether they consent to the publication of the reviews (via Publons) associated with their manuscript post-acceptance. Reviewers have the option to remain anonymous or to have their name published with their review. In either case, the contribution of the reviewer to the scientific process is tangible and credit can be attributed. Throughout the review process itself, we strictly adhere to our double-blind procedures. The uptake of the Open Review option by authors and the extent of anonymity retained by our reviewers will provide valuable insight into how the evolutionary biology community perceives Open Review and inform the JEB position on this going forward.

In line with our commitment to an expert and efficient peer review process, which is the crucial quality control that distinguishes true from fake science, and in order to enhance the manuscript

submission, reviewing and publication experience for our authors, JEB and our publisher Wiley continue to work together to provide a streamlined experience. We have recently introduced free-format submission, accepting manuscripts in any traditional format as long as all information is provided in a clear and consistent way accessible to reviewers. Formatting and typesetting of text and references will be carried out by our production team post-acceptance. This move was well-received by our authors as a huge time saver. Another significant chunk of our authors' time is taken up by redirecting their manuscript to an alternative journal should their paper not be accepted by JEB. Rejection decisions, whilst never a pleasure, are not always a result of poor quality. JEB introduced so-called fast-track referrals a few years ago to quickly transfer mistargeted submissions, together with their reviews, to one of our partner journals in the field of Ecology and Evolution where appropriate. This saves the authors time, as they do not have to start a new submission from scratch, and the original reviews can be used by the editors of the receiving journal. In partnership with Wiley, we have now professionalized and extended this option to include networks of many more journals (e.g. Ecology & Evolution, Evolution, Evolution Letters and Molecular Ecology) in such a way that editors can propose and authors ultimately choose between several alternative outlets for their manuscript in an efficient manner. (Find out more about this initiative here: https://www.wiley.com/network/journaleditors/editor-resources/helping-authors-get-published-referrals-and-transfers?elq_mid=49627&elq_cid=543486&elq_campaignId=31415&utm_campaign=31415&utm_source=eloquaEmail&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Jan_FY21_Q3_RM-CMAN_Newsletter_Editor%20Engagement%20Newsletter_R13276&elqTrackId=86aa5e251aea43d59e840a27bb3d7a76&elq=e061b93f9ecf449e85e9f61fed06ccc7&elqaid=49627&elqat=1.) At the same time, connection to preprint servers such as *BioRxiv* and *Authorea* are being automated: if authors have not already deposited their manuscript in a preprint server at the point of submission, we can automate this process. All of this helps to reduce the effort it takes authors to process their papers and ultimately get them published.

As my term as JEB EiC is coming to a close in 2021 and ESEB is already searching for my successor, I hope that together with our editorial board, ESEB and Wiley we have managed to steer our journal through the ongoing upheaval in scientific publishing and to improve the publishing experience of all stakeholders. I hope to see many of you again at the next ESEB conference in Prague, which will take place in summer of 2022, one year later than originally planned due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Wolf Blanckenhorn Editor-in-Chief

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