

## Behavioral Ecology – Report from the Editor-in-Chief

At the end of 2010, the journal will have published 21 volumes. This coming-of-age marks the extraordinary success of our journal, affirming the journal's significant role in meeting the aims of the society – to facilitate communication between workers in the field and stimulate research and related academic activities. Oxford University Press first published *Behavioral Ecology* in 1990, with Staffan Ufstrand (1990-1995) and Don Kramer (1990-1994) as founding Editors. The first volume had two issues comprising 21 papers of 177 pages. Since then, the journal has grown and last year OUP published six issues comprising 184 papers of 1582 pages. The scope of the journal has also expanded during this time, judging by the increased range of topics in our published papers and the diverse expertise of the Members of the Editorial Board. The journal has also become more international; 86% of our authors in the first two volumes had addresses in the USA (41%), Canada (19%), UK (13%) and Scandinavia (13%), whereas our authors are now drawn from almost 70 nations across the globe. In particular, there has been extraordinary growth in the number of authors from continental Europe and increasing numbers from Africa, South America, South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Further details of the accomplishments of the journal and its authors are provided in an Editorial in the first issue of Volume 20.

### Editors and the Editorial Board

The editorial structure of the journal *Behavioral Ecology* currently comprises an Editor-in-Chief, eleven Editors and fifteen members of the Editorial Board. The Editor-in-Chief is appointed by the Executive of the International Society for Behavioural Ecology and has overall responsibility for managing the editorial process and liaising with the Executive of ISBE and the publisher. The Editors of the journal, appointed by the Executive of ISBE on advise by the serving Editors, are wholly responsible for deciding whether allocated manuscripts are suitable for publication. Editors serve for terms of up to five years. Members of the Editorial Board, selected by the serving Editors and Executive of the ISBE, serve for terms of four years and provide general advice on manuscripts and specific commentary on potential contributions to the Forum Section.

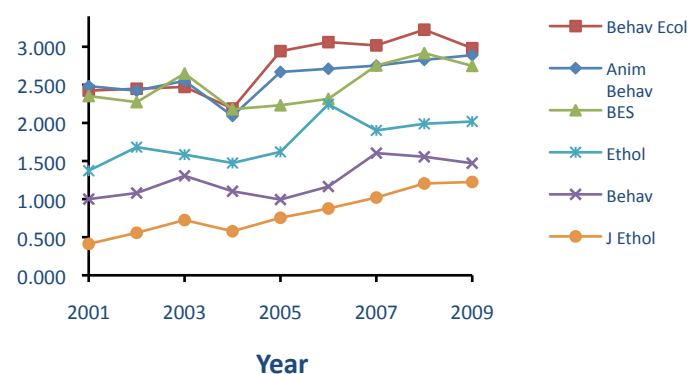
Three Editors completed their terms over the past two years, including Jeremy Field (2009), Will Cresswell (2009) and Mark Hauber (2010). Their generous contribution to the journal, both through ensuring we publish excellent papers of general interest, but also in providing wise advice over a variety of issues relating to the journal, is greatly appreciated. During this time, we have also appointed five new Editors, including Deborah Gordon (2012), Gil Rosenthal (2014), Michaela Hau (2014), Ben Hatchwell (2014) and Regina Macedo (2015). The combination of these new Editors and our current editors Rob Brooks (2011), Sue Healy (2012), Hans Hofmann (2012), Li Daiqin (2012), Candy Rowe (2013) and Iain Couzin (2013) represent considerable diversity of expertise. The membership of the Editorial Board has also changed, with Alexandra Basolo, Laurent Keller, Ellen Ketterson, Kate Lessells and Mats Olsson completing their term in October 2008, and we are very grateful for their generous support of the journal. We welcome Susan Alberts, Angus Buckling, Doug Emlen Eileen Hebets and Steve Phelps, who joined the Board in November 2008.

The composition of the editorial team is increasingly representative of the community of behavioural ecologists, including a broad range of taxonomic and conceptual expertise, increasing international representation including Europe, North and South America, South East Asia and Australia, and highly credible gender balance.

### Journal Impact

*Behavioral Ecology* is arguably the leading journal in the field, enjoying a reputation of publishing the results of interesting and rigorous research. While the value of ISI Impact Factors as a comparative measure of the standing of a journal is debatable, this metric indicates that *Behavioral Ecology* is consistently the most highly cited journal in the field (see Fig. 1), with the current Impact Factor reaching our highest score of 3.224 in 2008, and exceeding 3.0 in three of the past four years (dropping below 3.0 in 2009).

Figure 1. Journal Impact Factors



Impact Factors are influenced by a combination of citations per paper and the number of papers published. A more detail analysis (Table 1) of citation patters are provided in Table 1. Two key differences emerge when comparing *Behavioral Ecology* with, say, *Evolution*: the highest citing paper in *Behavioral Ecology* had one third of the number of citations of the equivalent paper in *Evolution*, and only 19% of the publications in *Evolution* have been cited less than 3 times, compared with 30% in *Behavioral Ecology*. Comparisons with *Animal Behaviour* and *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* suggest that they have a slightly longer tail of papers that are not cited.

**Table 1.** Details of citations of papers published between 2006-2009.

Journal	Number of papers	Average citations per paper	H-index	Impact Factor (2009)	Highest citation number	% papers with < 3 citations	% papers with 0 citations
<i>Animal Behaviour</i>	1473	6.13	26	2.890	66	34	11
<i>Behavioral Ecology</i>	661	7.14	24	2.981	57	30	7
<i>Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology</i>	782	6.61	22	2.749	57	32	11
<i>Behaviour</i>	341	3.28	12	1.471	22	53	20
<i>Ethology</i>	534	4.63	16	2.019	45	40	11
<i>Journal of Ethology</i>	203	2.31	8	1.225	31	67	29
<i>Biology Letters</i>	822	6.87	24	3.521	116	32	8
<i>Evolution</i>	1018	10.99	36	5.429	155	19	5

#### New Initiatives – the Forum Section

In 2010, we re-fashioned the Forum section to include two kinds of peer-reviewed pieces: ‘Ideas’ and ‘Invited Reviews’, and overseen by a dedicated Forum Editor. ‘Ideas’ are short pieces (normally less than 2000 words) containing new ideas, approaches and perspectives of current or emerging interest. These pieces are commissioned, following a review of the author’s brief (500 word) proposal by the Forum Editor and one Member of the Editorial Board. ‘Invited Reviews’ take the form of reviews, syntheses and meta analyses that are both forward-looking and of exceptional significance. There is a limit of around 5000 words and 50 references, with 2-3 figures or small tables. Broad, generic reviews, especially of an established area, and reviews focusing on an author’s work are not commissioned. The Forum Editor, drawing on advice from Members of the Editorial Board, identifies areas appropriate for review or synthesis and suitable authors from whom to commission a review. Authors can suggest a review article by submitting a brief (500 word) proposal direct to the Forum Editor; the Forum Editor and one Member of the Editorial Board will evaluate the proposal and decide whether to commission the review. ‘Invited Review’ articles are accompanied by 3-5 short (5-700 word) commentaries from leading researchers in the field, published at the end of the article with a short rejoinder (5-700 words total) if necessary from the ‘Invited Review’ author/s.

Rob Brooks very kindly agreed to take on the role of Forum Editor, and has commissioned 11 Invited Reviews, of which four have been accepted and one rejected. Six Ideas pieces have been commissioned, of which five have been accepted. The quality and appeal of the articles has been high, and we encourage authors to take advantage of the novel publishing opportunities offered the new Forum section.

#### Decision outcomes

The outcome of editorial decisions for manuscripts over the past two years (August 2008 – September 2010) was 32% accepted, 29% rejected without review and 38% rejected following review, which is broadly comparable with the previous two-year period (August 2006 – July 2008: 32% accepted; 27% rejected without review; and 41% rejected after review). Each Editor takes sole responsible for deciding the fate of manuscripts, including whether it will be sent out for review. These decisions depend on the judgement of the editor, and when a manuscript is reviewed, editors will be advised by, but not bound by, the reviewer’s recommendation. The average rejection rate among the current Editors is  $72 \pm 0.03\%$ , with  $42 \pm 0.06\%$  rejected immediately. The mean time to reach a decision across the current editors is  $42 \pm 3$  days. A decision was reached within 30 days for almost 50% of submitted manuscripts, and 75% of the manuscripts were initially resolved within 60 days (Fig. 2).

The time taken to reach a decision depended upon the outcome; manuscripts were rejected without benefit of review within two weeks of receipt, while the fate of reviewed manuscripts was resolved within ten weeks.

### *Impact of authors*

While manuscripts have been submitted from across the globe, there is variation in the outcomes according to the domicile of the lead author (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Decision outcomes according to country of origin of corresponding author, 2008-2010

Country	Accept	Total	Accept Ratio	Country	Accept	Total	Accept Ratio
Argentina	0	5	0%	Korea, Republic of	1	3	33%
Australia	42	102	41%	Latvia	1	2	50%
Austria	4	10	40%	Lithuania	0	1	0%
Belgium	3	14	21%	Mexico	2	11	18%
Brazil	2	12	17%	Namibia	0	1	0%
Canada	21	69	30%	Netherlands	17	32	53%
Chile	2	7	29%	New Caledonia	1	1	100%
China	3	30	10%	New Zealand	4	12	33%
Czech Republic	1	12	8%	Norway	5	18	28%
Denmark	3	4	75%	Palestinian Territory	0	1	0%
Egypt	0	2	0%	Poland	1	6	17%
Finland	8	21	38%	Portugal	2	3	67%
France	15	51	29%	Russian Federation	0	2	0%
French Guiana	0	1	0%	Serbia	1	2	50%
Germany	15	49	31%	Singapore	0	1	0%
Greece	0	2	0%	South Africa	1	10	10%
Hungary	2	9	22%	Spain	10	54	19%
Iceland	0	1	0%	Sri Lanka	1	1	100%
India	1	13	8%	Sweden	11	24	46%
Iran	0	1	0%	Switzerland	12	29	41%
Ireland	0	1	0%	Taiwan	2	7	29%
Israel	3	19	16%	United Kingdom	62	124	50%
Italy	2	15	13%	United States	106	308	34%
Japan	6	31	19%	Uruguay	1	3	33%
Jordan	0	1	0%				

Some details for the powerpoint presentation

### **Summary**

The journal is in excellent shape, attracting increasing number of submissions and publishing papers that are making a substantial contribution to the field. It is therefore meeting the aims of the International Society for Behavioral Ecology.

More personally, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have some 21 uninterrupted years of formal editorial association with the journal, commencing as one of the founding Members of the Editorial Board.

Mark A Elgar  
Editor-in-Chief, *Behavioral Ecology*  
Melbourne, October 2010