

***Behavioral Ecology* - Report from the Editor-in-Chief**

Our journal *Behavioral Ecology* has seen a number of significant changes since I became Editor-in-Chief in 2012. These changes have been made in an effort to improve our editorial procedures so that the journal provides an attractive option to researchers for the rapid publication of their work, to increase the journal's visibility and impact, and to more effectively promote our science to the general public.

New initiatives

Design

The most obvious change to the journal is its new colour page design, making articles more aesthetically pleasing in their electronic format. Along with this change we have also increased the use of colour figures; we now offer one free colour figure in the print version of the journal and we encourage authors to consider using colour more, particularly in complex figures where it can facilitate reader understanding.

New article types

We have introduced two new article types. The first is our *Editor's Choice*, an article deemed to be of particular worth, and which is given immediate free access status to enhance its impact. The second new article type is the *Comment and Response*. This offers the opportunity for critiques of regular articles published in the journal and for authors to respond to those critiques, a facility that was lost when our Forum section changed in 2010 to publishing Invited Reviews, Commentaries on Reviews, and Invited Ideas. Comments and their responses are published in the electronic journal, and listed in the Table of Contents of the hardcopy issue.

The Lay Summary

Lay summaries have been completely overhauled. These are now brief (75 words maximum) statements that convey the main message of the article to the general public, and are presented on the table of contents page of the electronic journal. Authors are encouraged to use the first 140 characters in such a way as they can be readily used in social media.

Social media

To further our public outreach, and to increase impact of our articles, in 2012 we launched a journal FaceBook page. The page is used to highlight journal news and articles published in the journal, and in particular our Editor's Choice articles. The page seems to be very popular with >2800 followers, and is also proving effective as our Editor's Choice posts have been reaching ~1500 readers on average, and up to 8000 readers in some cases.

Virtual Issues

Behavioral Ecology now publishes virtual issues on its electronic journal page. We plan for 2 virtual issues per year, built around topics of particular interest. For example, our first virtual issue appeared in 2013 and highlighted the field of Human Behavioral Ecology. It was built around Daniel Nettle and colleagues Invited Review and its commentaries, and included 22 articles on human behavioral ecology collected from past issues of the journal that were made freely available to view. The articles received between 300 and 600 views when the virtual issue went online.

Editorial Board

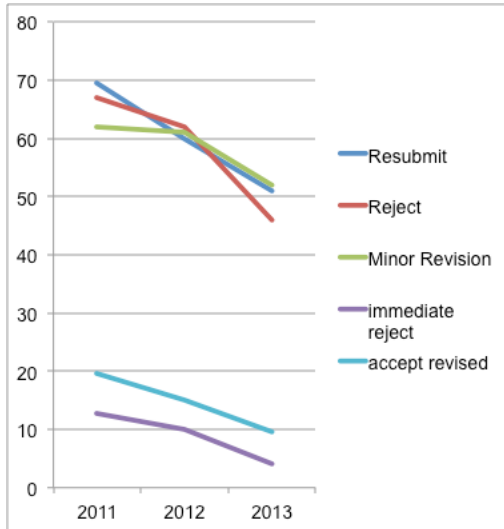
There have been a number of changes to the Editorial team. Some of our Editors have finished their terms of office over the last two years, including Ben Hatchwell (2012), Regina Macedo (2012), Candy Rowe (2013), Sue Healy (2013), Gil Rosenthal (2013), Anna Dornhaus (2013), and Sarah Pryke (2014). I would like to formally thank each of these individuals for their hard work and dedication to the journal. Accordingly, we now have 7 new Editors, Nick Royle, Bob Wong, Glauco Machado, Johanna Mappes, Marc Thery, John Fitzpatrick and Madelaine Beekman. I am extremely grateful to these individuals for agreeing to offer their time and expertise to build upon the strength of our journal over the coming years.

In order to increase the speed and efficiency of the editorial process we have revised the roles and responsibilities of our Editorial Board. My thanks go to Kerry Shaw, Angus Buckling, Steve Phelps, and Andy Zinc who have retired from the Editorial Board, and I welcome new members Stuart West, Neil Metcalfe, Mariella Herberstein, John Skelhorn, Lutz Fromhage, Maria Servidio and Carel ten Cate. Our editorial board provide rapid reviews on up to 10 manuscripts per year, and serve as adjudicators when necessary. Our editorial structure thus affords a broad area of expertise in behavioral ecology research.

Finally, with the retirement of Cathy Kennedy from OUP in August 2012, the Journal now sits in the portfolio of Ian Sherman at OUP. Ian has proved to be a responsive and engaged publishing Editor, and I am happy to report that the journal is in very good hands. We have established annual editorial meetings involving production staff at OUP and our Editorial Office Manager, Jenny Jekyll.

Manuscript Submissions, Decisions, and production

During 2012 (2013) *Behavioral Ecology* received 537 (549) Original Articles, and Invited 7 (12) Reviews and associated Commentaries, and 10 (6) Ideas. During the same periods decisions were made on 583 (535) submissions. Of these 69% (74%) were rejected (28% (29%) without review) and 31% (26%) were accepted for publication. The acceptance rate is slightly lower than previous reporting periods (34% of manuscripts were accepted in 2010 and 2011).



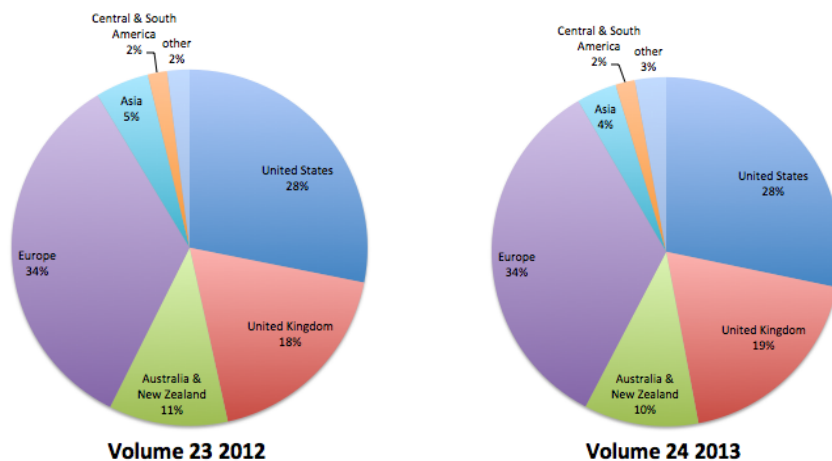
Since the last reporting period we have reduced the overall time from submission to decision by 30%, from 47 days in 2012 to 32 days in 2013. The longest wait period is when manuscripts are in the initial review process. This period has been reduced from around 65 days in 2011 to 49 days in 2013. Resubmission to final acceptance has been reduced from an average of 20 days in 2011 to an average of 10 days in 2013. The time for immediate rejections has been reduced from 13 days in 2011 to 4 days in 2013.

The time from decision to publication in advance of print fell from 7.2 weeks in 2012 to 5.2 weeks in 2013. Thus the work on our editorial procedures is providing demonstrable pay-offs.

Published Volumes

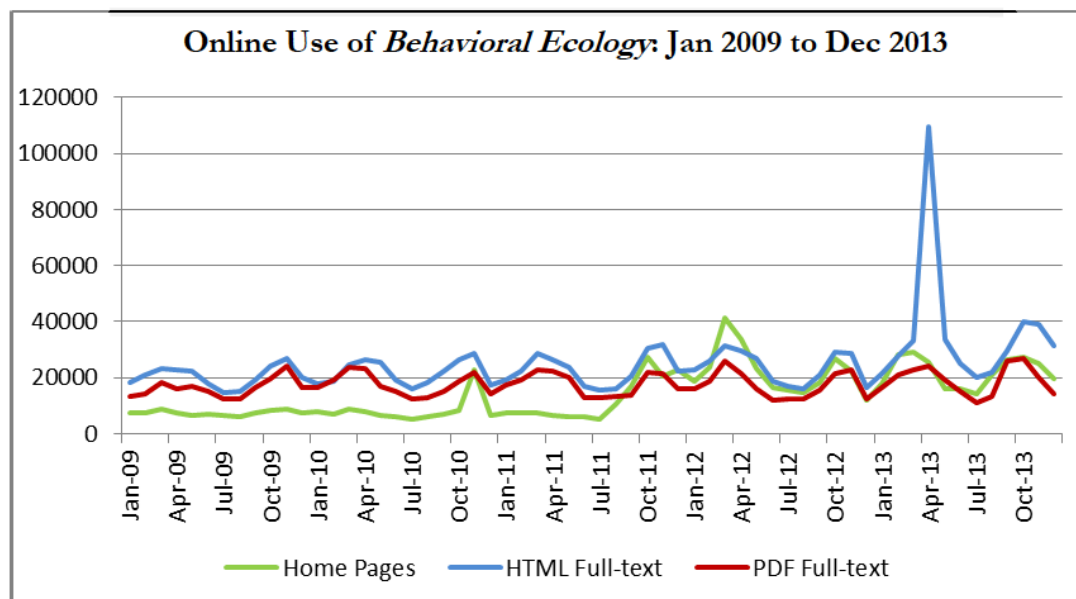
Volumes 23 and 24 of *Behavioral Ecology* appeared in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Volume 23 comprised a total of 1378 pages with 136 original articles, 2 Invited Reviews and 6 Invited Ideas. Volume 24 comprised a total of 1425 pages with 158 original articles, 5 Invited Reviews with associated Commentaries, and 3 Invited Ideas. Collectively these articles have received 909 citations, an average of 2.44 citations per article, with the most cited being Tim Fawcett and his colleagues Invited Review in volume 24 issue 1, "*Exposing the behavioral gambit: the evolution of learning and decision rules*".

Our authors come from 41 countries, with continental Europe, the USA and the UK being the largest represented groups.



Electronic Journal Usage

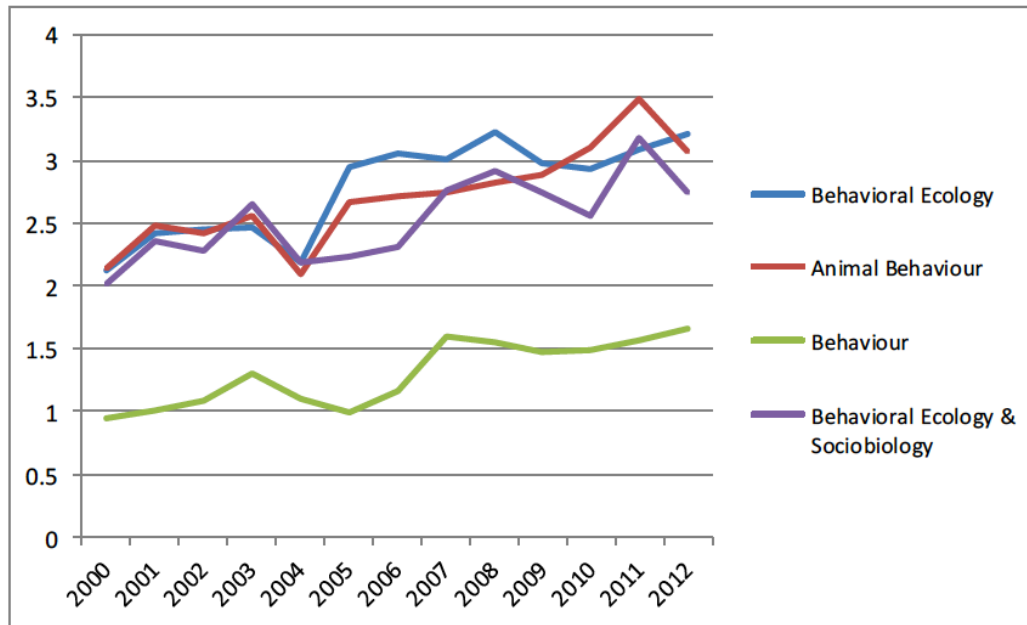
The home page has attracted between 20,000 and 40,000 hits per quarter, with downloads of full text HTML and pdfs in the region of 40,000 per month. The extremely high figure for April 2013 was due to 76,746 downloads of a single article by Thomas Huk and Wolfgang Winkel (2008) *Testing the Sexy Son Hypothesis: Research Framework for empirical approaches*, 19(2) 456-461. The high traffic was due to referrals from reddit.com, illustrating the power of social media. Sadly this translated to just 2 citations in 2013, and a lifetime citation rate of 0.71 per year. Perhaps the 77,000 readers are still writing their articles.



At the beginning of January 2014 there were 5,317 individuals signed up for our eTOC alerts, an increase of 7.89% since last year.

Journal Impact

The ISI Impact Factor for *Behavioral Ecology* rose from 3.083 in 2011 to 3.216 in 2012 and is currently ranked 17/49 in Behavioral Sciences, 34/136 in Ecology and 6/151 in Zoology. *Behavioral Ecology* ranks closely with *Animal Behaviour* (IF 3.068) and *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* (IF 2.752).



Celebrating 25 years of *Behavioral Ecology*

Behavioral Ecology has reached a significant milestone with the publication of volume 25. As such, throughout 2014 we have put a number of things in place to celebrate the remarkable success of our journal. The front cover and all articles published in 2014 bear an anniversary logo. In issue 1 I provided a brief outline of the history of our society and its journal, provided an overview of the changing landscape of behavioral ecology research over the last 25 years, and highlighted the ten most cited articles during the journal's history as an introduction to a series of commissioned Anniversary Essays which will continue to appear throughout the year. The aim was for authors to reflect on the past and future of behavioral ecology, either generally or from a specific research perspective. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the authors who agreed to write these essays, which I hope our readership will find both entertaining and thought provoking. Finally, our first Virtual Issue for 2014 has been a 25th Anniversary Celebration Issue, with our Editors, past and present, selecting articles from the archives that they feel have contributed most to the development of our discipline. The Virtual Issue also features an invited review on the behavioral ecology approach along with a series of invited commentaries on that review, and finally it highlights our Pitelka Award winning articles, in recognition that the future of our science, society and journal lies in the hands of those who are just starting their careers as behavioral ecologists.



Leigh W. Simmons

Editor-in-Chief, *Behavioral Ecology*
 leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au