



ASSOCIATION FOR
TROPICAL BIOLOGY
AND CONSERVATION

Publishing Your Scientific Results

Dr. Jennifer Powers

bioTROPICA

THE SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL OF THE ATBC

**You wrote your first
manuscript!**



**You wrote your first
manuscript!
Congratulations... now
the hard work starts!**



A Roadmap to the Publication Process

- **Nuts and bolts of publication**
- **Submitting your manuscript**
- **After your paper comes out**
- **Resources**



**Overview of the
publication
process... what
actually happens
when you submit a
manuscript?**



Peer Review Process



Peer Review Process

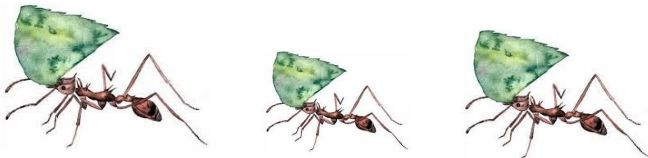


This process is iterative... it often takes several rounds to publish a paper!

The reviewers' job...

Assess the manuscript for:

- **Novelty or contribution**– how does this advance the field?
- **Execution**– any flaws in design, analysis, interpretation?
- **Clarity**– do the text, figures, and tables make sense?
- **Quality of the scholarship**– context, are citations appropriate, etc



REVIEWS HAVE A COMMON STRUCTURE

- **Summarize the manuscript– what did the authors do?**
- **Present major strengths and weaknesses**
- **List of Minor Comments (typos, etc)**
- **Marked draft (sometimes)**



Potential Decisions...

- **Accept without any changes (acceptance):** The journal will publish the paper in its original form. This type of decision outcome is rare
- **Accept with minor revisions (acceptance):** The journal will publish the paper and asks the author to make small corrections. This is typically the best outcome that authors should hope for
- **Accept after major revisions (conditional acceptance):** The journal will publish the paper provided the authors make the changes suggested by the reviewers and/or editors
- **Revise and resubmit (conditional rejection):** The journal is willing to reconsider the paper in another round of decision making after the authors make major changes
- **Reject the paper (outright rejection):** The journal will not publish the paper or reconsider it even if the authors make major revisions

<https://authorservices.wiley.com/author-resources/Journal-Authors/submission-peer-review/peer-review.html>



OK! You are ready! Go!
Submitting your manuscript



Where to submit

Cover letter

“Response to reviewers” letter



before Where to submit

before Cover letter

after “Response to reviewers” letter



Which journal should you submit to?

Things to watch out for...

Is a pre-print server right for you?



Which journal should you submit to?

Impact factor is only one consideration
Society journals are edited by scientists
Some journals have professional editors
Who do you want to read your paper?
Don't try to "sneak" your manuscript in

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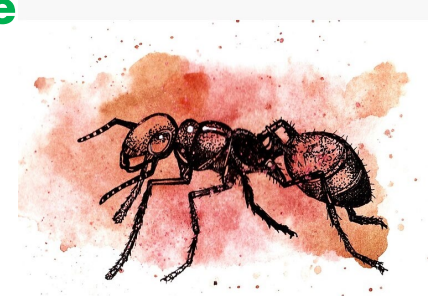
Things to watch out for...

Predatory journals: huge fees, no peer-review quick acceptance
Invitation via mass mailing

<https://predatoryjournals.com/journals/>

Is a pre-print server right for you?

Allows you to quickly "post" your manuscript before submission to a journal
Allows you to cite it, avoid getting "scooped"
More common in some fields than others



Cover Letter

Many journals explicitly state what to include in the cover letter... briefly describe..



- **Why is this novel or important?**
- **Why is it a good fit for the journal?**
- **State that all authors have read it and agree to the contents**

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June 6th, 2019

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Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of my co-authors to submit a manuscript entitled “A catastrophic tropical drought kills hydraulically vulnerable tree species” for consideration in the journal XYZ. As rainfall becomes more variable and droughts more extreme in tropical forests, there is the expectation that drought-induced tree mortality should rise. Thus, there is great interest among ecologists in understanding which trees die during a drought, and whether aspects of species biology and/or life history traits help predict which species are vulnerable. This need is especially acute in diverse ecosystems such as tropical forests. Previous studies have used meta-analyses to try to understand how traits are linked to species’ performances during drought. However, these studies are hampered by the issue that demographic data (i.e. mortality rates) and trait data are often collected in different locations, making them difficult to merge.

Most experimental studies of forest drought on tree response manipulate soil water. By contrast, our study capitalizes upon a major drought event in a diverse tropical forest to make a detailed search for linkages between tree properties and the likelihood of death under current natural climate variation. Here we combine a ten-year record of tree mortality for a region in Costa Rica with extensive measurements of physiological, chemical and leaf economic traits for tree species, which we collected in this region. The 2015 El Niño Southern Oscillation resulted in the most intense drought on record in this region, resulting in widespread tree mortality. Mortality rates ranged from 0 to 35% among species. We examine a large number of potential correlates to explain variation among species in vulnerability to extreme drought and hydraulic traits emerge as the best predictor. These novel results thus underscore the vulnerability of tropical forests to extreme drought and suggest the most promising directions for future research.

We confirm that none of these results have been published previously, nor is the manuscript under consideration at elsewhere. We have included all trait and distribution data for the 53 focal species as a

RED FLAGS for an editor...

- **Titles: using the terms “preliminary” or “pilot study”**
- **Goals: using terms “explore”, “describe”, “document”**
- **Introductions that do not place the work in a broader context**



Posted on [February 24, 2016](#) by [Brian McGill](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

The 5 pivotal paragraphs in a paper

I have argued before that writing a paper for submission to a journal is about a lot more than having done some work that you can describe in methods and results sections. It is certainly about the [nuts-and-bolts mechanics of good writing at the sentence level](#).



Suggesting Potential Reviewers

- **Suggest knowledgeable reviewers without conflicts of interest**
- **It is acceptable to ask for potential reviewers to be excluded, if justified**

Dealing with rejection



Dealing with rejection

- **Rejected:** take the feedback you received, revise, and submit elsewhere (it happens to **ALL of us!**). But, some manuscripts need more data.
- **Revisions:** be happy that you have the opportunity to improve your manuscript



Develop a **STRATEGY** for revisions and the “Response to Reviewers” Letter

- **Goal: communicate to the editors and reviewers what changes you have made**
- **Start by copying all of the comments into a new document; change font for to distinguish author and reviewer comments**
- **Respond to every point**



Writing a Response to Reviewers Letter...

EDITORIAL

Ten simple rules for writing a response to reviewers

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You recently submitted your first manuscript for publication, and you were pleased when the editor decided to send the manuscript out for peer review. Now you have gotten the reviews back, and the editor has asked you to revise your manuscript in light of the reviewers' comments. How should you tackle this task?

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve your manuscript by allowing you to take into account the advice of multiple experts in your field. Indeed, empirical evidence suggests that papers that have undergone multiple rounds of peer review fare better in terms of citation counts than papers that are quickly accepted [1]. However, in practice, the review pro-

Example “Response to Reviewers Letter”

- *I would also encourage a more thorough and earlier discussion on how the successional dynamics operating in these secondary forest plots of different ages (and contrasting successional niches of species) may have influenced the results or how the analysis integrate such specificities.*

While we agree that this is a potentially interesting topic, our data did not suggest a strong effect of successional status on mortality rates during the drought. Indeed, successional status of different species was not correlated with mortality rates (Figure 4A). We now re-iterate this in the Discussion in this sentence:

“It is possible that species-specific hydraulic traits that underpin vulnerability to drought supersede tree size or successional status of the species in this regenerating forest.”

Point-by-point comments:

I. 52: I would more explicitly emphasize the lack of relevant data than the difficulty to predict drought location, which is a bit unclear at first glance.

Duly noted! We have added this to the Abstract.

I. 53: distribution of what ? species ?

Yes, we have clarified this now in the Introduction.

BAD

The reviewer did not understand what we were saying.

BETTER

Perhaps we were unclear. We meant to imply “XYZ”. The revised text clarifies this as follows:

“We focused on identifying thresholds of tree response to drought, using hydraulic traits to quantify vulnerability....”



BAD

The reviewer is wrong.

BETTER

We respectfully disagree with the reviewer.



REVIEWER COMMENT

The Introduction does not set up the appropriate framework. While the data and modeling are clearly a test of Rapoport's Rule, the introduction fails to mention this important context.

BAD

Done.

BETTER

We thank the reviewer for this insight. The revised Introduction now reads: “In investigating latitudinal gradients in species ranges, our study explicitly tests ...”





Thank Reviewers!!!

- **Reviewers are not paid or compensated**
- **Many work very hard to provide constructive feedback**
- **Reviews improve papers**



Publication Ethics

- **Ensure all folks who contributed are co-authors (check COPE guidelines)**
- **All co-authors should have the opportunity to review MS before submission**
- **Cite relevant sources and related work**
- **Acknowledge funding sources and permit #s**
- **Make data available and usable**



Congratulations! Paper published!



- **Get the word out on social media! Twitter, Facebook etc**
- **Send copies to advisors, colleagues, etc.**
- **Talk with your institution about a press release**
- **Write a blog post**
- **Communicate your results to conservation managers, park officials, local stakeholders, etc**

Resources and Where to Get Help

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 - Reviewers
 - Editors
 - Ethics Guidelines
 - Help
 - Open Research

Author Resources



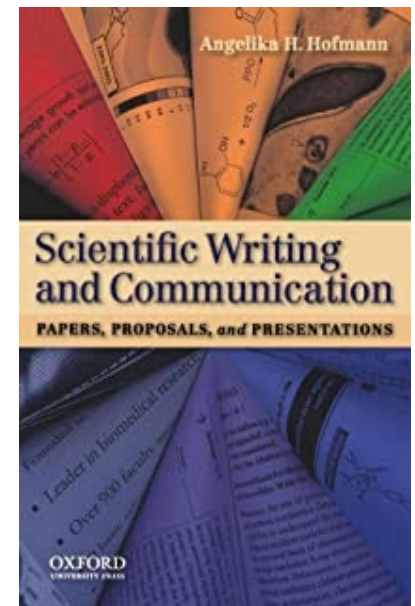
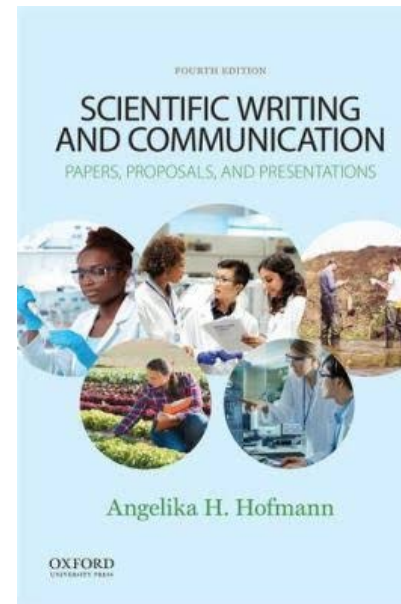
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Information and guidelines on publishing your next book.



*Escultura a suro
Tempo de Brasil*

Muchas gracias y suerte!



Abel Rodriguez