

# ECOSYSTEMS – Instructions for Authors

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# Electronic Submissions

We use an online system of manuscript tracking called ScholarOne Manuscripts (formerly Manuscript Central) that allows quick, efficient processing of your manuscript.

Please use the link "Submit Online" on the journal's homepage to upload your manuscript, or log directly onto the site

<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eco>

and upload your manuscripts following the instructions given on the screen.

Please note: if you have submitted to this journal before or served as a referee, please use the Password Help option. You will then receive an automatic e-mail with your user id and password. Otherwise please create a new account and then follow the instructions given on the screen.

## Author Accounts:

Authors entering the journal's ScholarOne site can either create a new account or use an existing one. When you have an existing account, use it for all your submissions and you can track their status on the same page.

## Getting Started:

Once you have logged into your account, ScholarOne will lead you through the submission process in a step-by-step orderly process. If you cannot finish your submission in one visit, you can save a draft and reenter the process at the same point for that manuscript.

While submitting your electronic manuscript, you will be required to enter data about your manuscript in the system. These include title, subtitle, author names and affiliations, and so forth. Support for special characters is available. At any point during this process, there are Help buttons available to see common questions and a support link to ask a specific question via email.

## Uploading Files:

Electronic files can be uploaded as PDF, PostScript, Word or RTF. PDF and PostScript files should already contain the graphics within the file. (PostScript files are converted by the system into PDF so that Editors and reviewers may share them. RTF (Rich Text Format) is a common export property of most popular word processors. Check your word processor to see if it can export or "Save As" your file in RTF format. MS Word and WordPerfect both contain this function. After uploading the RTF for text, you will be prompted for uploading graphics. Common graphics files such as GIF, JPEG, EPS, TIFF and many others are supported. After uploading the parts of the article in this manner, the system will convert the files to PDF. You will see the result of the conversion with the Acrobat plug-in in your browser. Keep copies of your word-processing and graphics files. You may want to revise the manuscript during the review process and you will need the original files if your manuscript is accepted. At any point during this process, there are Help buttons available to see common questions and a support link to ask a specific question via email.

You will also be notified by email that your submission was successful.

## Keeping Track:

After submission, you may return periodically and monitor the progress of your submission through the review process.

## ECOSYSTEMS Editorial Office:

Suzann McClenahan

E-Mail: [ecosys@zoology.wisc.edu](mailto:ecosys@zoology.wisc.edu)

<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eco>

## Scope of the Journal

ECOSYSTEMS publishes research on ecosystem structure and processes; flows of organisms and materials within and among ecosystems; and structure, process, and change on landscapes and waterscapes. The scope of ecosystem science extends from bounded ecosystems, such as watersheds, to spatially complex landscapes, to the Earth itself. The journal welcomes innovative research from terrestrial, aquatic and marine systems. ECOSYSTEMS publishes papers that make general contributions to ecosystem science and will be of interest to a wide international audience.

All of ecology occurs within or among ecosystems, but not all ecology is ecosystem research (S.G. Fisher 1997; DOI: 10.2307/1468020). For example, a study of the effect of the environment on the autecology, behavioral ecology or physiological ecology of a particular species is not within the scope of ECOSYSTEMS. Studies of community ecology, conservation biology, or biodiversity with no feedbacks to the abiotic environment or flow of energy and materials are not within the scope of ECOSYSTEMS.

An ecosystem is an explicitly bounded place that includes all the organisms, all parts of the abiotic environment, and their interactions within its boundaries. Flows of energy (including organic carbon) and materials (such as carbon, nitrogen, or phosphorus) within ecosystems and across their boundaries, changes in these flows, and changes in biotic and abiotic structure and feedbacks over time are topics of ecosystem research. Ecosystem ecology has strong links to other disciplines such as landscape ecology, global ecology, biogeochemistry, aquatic ecology, conservation and natural resource management. Landscape ecology addresses spatial dynamics and interactions among ecosystems, such as flows of organisms and materials across boundaries. Changes over time in spatial heterogeneity and lateral movements of organisms and material are topics of ecosystem research.

For more background on ecosystem and landscape science we suggest:

Turner, M. G., and J. R. Gardner. 2015. *Landscape Ecology in Theory and Practice*, Second ed. Springer-Verlag.

Weathers, K. C., D. L. Strayer, and G. E. Likens. 2021. *Fundamentals of Ecosystem Science*, Second ed. Elsevier.

# Types of Contribution

## RESEARCH ARTICLES:

Most manuscripts published in ECOSYSTEMS report original research within the domain of ecosystem-level science. Studies should address questions in ecosystem science that are of general interest to an international audience, and research goals and findings should be placed in the context of current understanding of patterns and processes of ecosystems or land- and seascapes. ECOSYSTEMS publishes research from terrestrial, freshwater or marine ecosystems across a wide range of spatial and temporal scales. ECOSYSTEMS also welcomes interdisciplinary studies that integrate biotic, abiotic and social data.

Articles that focus on other levels of ecological science (e.g., population or community ecology) must make connections to ecosystem science or management to be considered for publication in ECOSYSTEMS.

## MINI-REVIEWS:

Periodically, ECOSYSTEMS publishes mini-reviews on recent or emerging topics in ecosystem science that are of wide interest. Most mini-reviews are invited by the editors in chief, but contributed mini-reviews are also published. Effective mini-reviews are not just summaries of the literature; rather, they synthesize current understanding to generate new insights and advance the field. Exhaustive review is not the goal, although it is important to provide context and summarize relevant history of the topic. Figures, including conceptual figures that help explain or organize information, are encouraged. Mini-reviews should also identify future research directions and take a point of view. Authors interested in preparing a mini-review should submit a short prospectus for consideration by the editors. Manuscripts follow standard guidelines.

## SPECIAL FEATURES:

Special features are collections of related papers (typically four to six) that address aspects of a current topic in ecosystem science. Individual articles must be complementary, and each must also stand on its own merit. Most special features are invited, but prospective authors also may submit a prospectus for consideration. Special feature papers are 3000-4000 words in length.

## EDITORIALS:

Most editorials are short commentaries published with special features or by invitation of the editors. Such articles offer context, reflection, and opinion on a relevant topic. Editorials are 1000- 2000 words in length.

# Preparation of Manuscripts

Please follow these instructions closely when preparing a manuscript. Careful preparation of the manuscript will facilitate copy editing and typesetting and can expedite publication. Manuscripts not

formatted according to ECOSYSTEMS guidelines may be rejected without review. To submit your prepared manuscript, use the following URL to reach ECOSYSTEMS ScholarOne Manuscripts (Manuscript Central):

<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eco>

## Authorship Policy:

Authorship should be restricted to those who have contributed substantially to the work in one or more of the following categories:

- Conceived of or designed study
- Performed research
- Analyzed data
- Contributed new methods or models
- Wrote the paper

Each author is required to indicate her or his contribution to the work. The information should be included as a footnote to the title page of the paper when the manuscript is submitted. Author contributions will be identified by initials and published as a footnote on page one of the article.

## Submission Policy:

When submitting a manuscript for publication in ECOSYSTEMS, authors must confirm in their cover letter that the work has not been published previously or concurrently submitted for publication elsewhere.

Ecosystems' policy on prior publication follows the policy of Springer-Nature (<https://www.springer.com/gp/editorial-policies/preprint-sharing>).

Preprints are defined as an author's version of a research manuscript prior to formal peer review at a journal, which is deposited on a public server (as described in [Preprints for the life sciences](#), Science 352, 899–901 2016); preprints may be posted at any time during the peer review process. Posting of preprints is not considered prior publication and will not jeopardize consideration at Springer Nature journals.

Authors should disclose the preprint and provide the link at the time of submitting their paper to Ecosystems.

If the manuscript is accepted, the author must provide a link to the published paper with the preprint posting.

Related manuscripts that are *in press* or submitted elsewhere and that are fundamental to the evaluation of the submitted manuscript should be included as Supplemental Material with the submission.

## USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Use of AI for any part of a study or manuscript must be explained in the Methods section of the manuscript. Because science is a creative, original endeavor, AI should never be used to write a manuscript. However, AI maybe used for assistance with coding or checking original writing for appropriate language and grammar.

## Model and Data Archiving:

Authors should post their data with complete metadata in a form that is sufficiently complete for readers to recreate results in the paper. In addition, authors should also post any novel statistical or mathematical code such that results can be reproduced. Data should be posted on a globally available repository such as Dryad, Environmental Data Initiative (EDI), or Zenodo. Data citations including DOI should be included under Data Availability before the Literature Cited.

## Manuscript Highlights:

Provide three bullet points that state the three most important ideas from the article. Each bullet point should be no more than 85 characters including spaces. Avoid jargon; the bullets should be accessible to a broad readership. List the bullets on the title page of the manuscript.

## COVER LETTER

Please include the following information in your cover letter.

- (1) Was AI used for any purpose in this manuscript?
- (2) If yes, how was it used? Assistance with coding? Editing original text for grammar or language? Translation from a different language to English? Other?
- (3) If Other, please explain.
- (4) Please confirm that your use of AI has been clearly described in the Methods section of the manuscript.

## FORM OF THE MANUSCRIPT:

Papers must be written in English. The entire manuscript should be double-spaced. Every page should be numbered. The elements of the paper should be presented in the following sequence:

**TITLE**, with a shortened version for page headings that does not exceed 45 characters.

Complete **AUTHOR NAMES** for each author, plus their mailing address and institutional affiliation. Include phone/FAX numbers and an e-mail address for the corresponding author. Also include author contributions on the cover page.

**ABSTRACT** of up to 250 words that highlights the objectives, results, and conclusions of the paper. **KEY WORDS** (6 to 10), to identify the subjects under which the article may be indexed.

**MANUSCRIPT HIGHLIGHTS**. Provide three bullets (up to 85 characters for each, including spaces) that highlight the important contributions of your study for a general reader.

**TEXT** of the manuscript. Subheadings should be used as appropriate. Manuscripts generally should not exceed 8,000 words, or 30-35 double-spaced manuscript pages including figures and references. Please consult recent issues of the journal for examples. This journal uses “and others” instead of “et al.” in reference citations within the text.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** (optional)

**DATA AVAILABILITY**. Include the citation and DOI for the data, metadata, and novel statistical and mathematical code used to generate results of this study. Data should be posted in a globally available repository such as Dryad, Environmental Data Initiative (EDI), or Zenodo.

**REFERENCES**. Only essential references should be used, and only references cited in the article should appear in the bibliography. Responsibility for the accuracy of bibliographic references rests with the author. "In press" citations must include the name of the journal that has accepted the paper. For specific guidelines on reference style, see Preparing a 'Literature Cited List'. Please carefully proofread references for completeness and consistency prior to submission.

**TABLES** should be on separate pages. **TABLE LEGENDS** should be on a separate page. Tables should have a clear and rational structure. All tables should be numbered. **TABLE TITLES** may be up to 10 words long. Provide enough information in legends so that each table is understandable without reference to the text. Every table must be cited in the text.

**FIGURE LEGENDS** should be on a separate page. Every figure must be cited in the text. **FIGURES** should be on separate pages (not embedded in the text).



**APPENDICES/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL (optional)**

**In addition to electronic appendices, authors are encouraged to submit visual enrichment material such as photographs, videos and simulations.**

**Each appendix/supplement must have a title and will be published in electronic form only.**

## ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

**STYLE MANUAL:** Guidelines for references, symbols, abbreviations, units of measurement, etc. may be found in *Scientific Style and Format: The CBE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*, Sixth Edition, Cambridge University Press, New York.

**FOOTNOTES:** These should not be used; information should be integrated into the text.

**METRIC SYSTEM:** The metric system should be used throughout. If required, equivalent values in other systems may be placed in parentheses immediately after the metric value.

**MATHEMATICAL SYMBOLS:** Marginal notes to the copy editor should be used to explain mathematical symbols used in the text.

### ILLUSTRATIONS:

*NOTE: Color figures are now free of charge in both the online and print editions of Ecosystems.*

Illustrations should be of high quality (i.e., professionally drawn or generated by graphics software). Black and white photographs should be provided as 300 dpi TIF, JPG, or EPS files. Color illustrations should be provided as 300 dpi TIF, JPG, or EPS files. Line art should be provided as TIF, JPG, or EPS files at 600 dpi.

Each figure must be labeled indicating figure number. Figures should be submitted at their final size. See below for technical specifications.

**COVER ILLUSTRATIONS:** Authors are invited to submit non-copyrighted color illustrations for possible use on the cover. Note, however, that even if a color illustration is accepted for the cover of *Ecosystems*, it may not appear in the same issue as the article it accompanies.

**PAGE PROOFS:** Once an article has been accepted, authors will be promptly notified, and the manuscript will immediately enter production. Page proofs will be sent to the corresponding author for review and correction as necessary. Proofs should be returned to the publisher promptly (specific instructions will accompany the proof) to ensure timely publication. Articles must not be rewritten at the proof stage; only corrections of errors may be made at this stage.

**REPRINTS:** When page proofs are sent to the corresponding author, a reprint order form will be included, at which time reprints may be ordered.

**COPYRIGHT:** Submission of a manuscript implies: that the work described has not been published before (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture, review, or thesis); that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere; that its publication has been approved by all co-authors; that, if and when the manuscript is accepted for publication, the authors agree to transfer the copyright to the publisher; that the manuscript will not be published elsewhere without the consent of the copyright holder; that written permission of the copyright holder is obtained by the authors for material used from other copyrighted sources; and that any costs associated with obtaining this permission are the responsibility of the authors.

## Acknowledgments and Funding Information

Acknowledgments of people, grants, funds, etc. should be placed in a separate section before the reference list. The names of funding organizations should be written in full. In addition, please provide the funding information in a separate step of the submission process in the peer review system. Funder names should preferably be selected from the standardized list you will see during submission. If the funding institution you need is not listed, it can be entered as free text. Funding information will be published as searchable metadata for the accepted article, whereas acknowledgements are published within the paper.

## Guidelines for Preparing a 'Literature Cited' List

- Double space the list.
- Check the text citations against the Literature Cited list to make sure there are no gaps or inconsistencies.
- Spell out journal titles completely.
- Do not include abstracts or unpublished material in the Literature Cited list. Instead, cite them in the text as Personal Observations, Personal Communications, or Unpublished Data/Unpublished Manuscript. Identify authors of unpublished work.
- Proofread the Literature Cited prior to submission!

Use the following formats for Literature Cited style:

### Journal Article:

Elser JJ, Goldman CR. 1991. Zooplankton effects on phytoplankton in lakes of contrasting trophic status. *Limnology and Oceanography* 36: 6490.

Fowler RA, Osburn CL, Saros JE. 2020. Climate-driven changes in dissolved organic carbon and water clarity in Arctic lakes of west Greenland. *Journal of Geophysical Research Biogeosciences* 125:e2019JG005170.

### Journal Article in press:

Cottingham KL, Knight SE. 1998. Effects of grazer size on the response of mesotrophic lakes to experimental enrichment. *Water Science and Technology*, in press.

### Article in edited book:

Carpenter, SR, Frost TM, Kitchell JF, Kratz TK, Schindler DW, Shearer J, Sprules WG, Vanni MJ, Zimmerman AP. 1991. Patterns of primary production and herbivory in 25 North American lake ecosystems. Cole J, Lovett G, Findlay S, editors. *Comparative analyses of ecosystems*. New York: Springer-Verlag New York. p67-96.

### Edited book:

Kitchell, JF, editor. 1992. *Food web management: a case study of Lake Mendota*. New York: Springer-Verlag New York.

Authored book:

Ijung, L. 1987. System identification: theory for the user. Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice- Hall. 270p.

## Guidelines for Electronically Produced Illustrations for Print

General:

Send illustrations separately from the text (i.e., files should not be integrated with the text files).

Vector (line) Graphics:

Vector graphics exported from a drawing program should be stored in EPS format.

Suitable drawing program: Adobe Illustrator. For simple line art, the following drawing programs are also acceptable: Corel Draw, Freehand, Canvas, Sigma Plot. No rules narrower than .25 pt.

No gray screens paler than 15% or darker than 60%.

Screens meant to be differentiated from one another must differ by at least 15%.

Spreadsheet/Presentation Graphics:

Most presentation programs (Excel, PowerPoint, Freelance) produce data that cannot be stored in an EPS format. Therefore, graphics produced by these programs cannot be used for print.

Halftone Illustrations:

Black & white and color illustrations should be saved in TIFF format. Illustrations should be created using Adobe Photoshop whenever possible.

Scans:\*

Scanned reproductions of black and white photographs should be provided as 300 ppi TIFF files.

Scanned color illustrations should be provided as TIFF files scanned at a minimum of 300 ppi with a 24-bit color depth.

Line art should be provided as TIFF files at 600 ppi.

Graphics from Videos:

Separate files should be prepared for frames from a video that are to be printed in the journal. When preparing these files, you should follow the same rules as listed under Halftone Illustrations.

## Does Springer provide English language support?

For editors and reviewers to accurately assess the work presented in your manuscript you need to ensure the English language is of sufficient quality to be understood. If you need help with writing in English, you should consider:

- Asking a colleague who is a native English speaker to review your manuscript for clarity
- Doing the English language tutorial, which covers the common mistakes when writing in English. It is a part of our [author and peer reviewer tutorials](#).
- Using a professional language editing service where editors will improve the English to ensure that your meaning is clear and identify problems that require your review. Two such services are provided by our affiliates [Nature Research Editing Service](#) and [American Journal Experts](#).

Please note that the use of a language editing service is not a requirement for publication and does not imply or guarantee that the article will be selected for peer review or accepted.

If your manuscript is accepted, it will be checked by our copy editors for spelling and formal style before publication.

## Guidelines for Electronically Produced Illustrations for ONLINE

### Video:

Quicktime (.mov) is the preferred format, but .rm, .avi, .mpg, etc. are acceptable.

No video file should be larger than 2MB. To decrease the size of your file, consider changing one or more of the following variables: frame speed, number of colors/greys, viewing size (in pixels), or compression. Video is subject to Editorial review and approval.

## Ethical Responsibilities of Authors

This journal is committed to upholding the integrity of the scientific record. As a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) the journal will follow the COPE guidelines on how to deal with potential acts of misconduct.

Authors should refrain from misrepresenting research results, which could damage the trust in the journal, the professionalism of scientific authorship, and ultimately the entire scientific endeavor. Maintaining integrity of the research and its presentation can be achieved by following the rules of good scientific practice, which include:

- The manuscript has not been submitted to more than one journal for simultaneous consideration.
- The manuscript has not been published previously (partly or in full), unless the new work concerns an expansion of previous work (please explain the re-use of any material to avoid the hint of text-recycling (“self-plagiarism”).

- A single study is not split up into several parts to increase the quantity of submissions and submitted to various journals or to one journal over time (e.g., “salami-slicing”).
- No data have been fabricated or manipulated (including images) to support your conclusions
- No data, text, or theories by others are presented as if they were the author’s own (“plagiarism”). Proper acknowledgements to other works must be given (this includes material that is closely copied (near verbatim), summarized and/or paraphrased), quotation marks are used for verbatim copying of material, and permissions are secured for material that is copyrighted.

**Important note:** the journal may use software to screen for plagiarism.

- Consent to submit has been received explicitly from all coauthors, as well as from the responsible authorities - tacitly or explicitly - at the institute/organization where the work has been carried out, **before** the work is submitted.
- Authors whose names appear on the submission have contributed sufficiently to the scientific work and therefore share collective responsibility and accountability for the results.

In addition:

- Changes of authorship or in the order of authors are not accepted **after** acceptance of a manuscript.
- Requesting to add or delete authors at revision stage, proof stage, or after publication is a serious matter and may be considered when justifiably warranted. Justification for changes in authorship must be compelling and may be considered only after receipt of written approval from all authors and a convincing, detailed explanation about the role/deletion of the new/deleted author. In case of changes at revision stage, a letter must accompany the revised manuscript. In case of changes after acceptance or publication, the request and documentation must be sent via the Publisher to the Editor-in-Chief. In all cases, further documentation may be required to support your request. The decision on accepting the change rests with the Editor-in-Chief of the journal and may be turned down. Therefore, authors are strongly advised to ensure the correct author group, corresponding author, and order of authors at submission.
- Upon request authors should be prepared to send relevant documentation or data in order to verify the validity of the results. This could be in the form of raw data, samples, records, etc.
- If there is a suspicion of misconduct, the journal will carry out an investigation following the COPE guidelines. If, after investigation, the allegation seems to raise valid concerns, the accused author will be contacted and given an opportunity to address the issue. If misconduct has been established beyond reasonable doubt, this may result in the Editor-in-Chief’s implementation of the following measures, including, but not limited to:
  - If the article is still under consideration, it may be rejected and returned to the author.
  - If the article has already been published online, depending on the nature and severity of the infraction, either an erratum will be placed with the article or in severe cases complete retraction of the article will occur. The reason must be given in the published erratum or retraction note.
  - The author’s institution may be informed.

# Compliance with Ethical Standards

To ensure objectivity and transparency in research and to ensure that accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct have been followed, authors should include information regarding sources of funding, potential conflicts of interest (financial or non-financial), informed consent if the research involved human participants, and a statement on welfare of animals if the research involved animals.

Authors should include the following statements (if applicable) in a separate section entitled “Compliance with Ethical Standards” when submitting a paper:

- Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- Research involving Human Participants and/or Animals
- Informed consent

Please note that standards could vary slightly per journal dependent on their peer review policies (i.e., single or double-blind peer review) as well as per journal subject discipline. Before submitting your article check the instructions following this section carefully.

The corresponding author should be prepared to collect documentation of compliance with ethical standards and send if requested during peer review or after publication.

The Editors reserve the right to reject manuscripts that do not comply with the above-mentioned guidelines. The author will be held responsible for false statements or failure to fulfill the above-mentioned guidelines.

# Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest

Authors must disclose all relationships or interests that could have direct or potential influence or impart bias on the work. Although an author may not feel there is any conflict, disclosure of relationships and interests provides a more complete and transparent process, leading to an accurate and objective assessment of the work. Awareness of a real or perceived conflict of interest is a perspective to which the readers are entitled. This is not meant to imply that a financial relationship with an organization that sponsored the research or compensation received for consultancy work is inappropriate. Examples of potential conflicts of interests **that are directly or indirectly related to the research** may include but are not limited to the following:

- Research grants from funding agencies (please give the research funder and the grant number)
- Honoraria for speaking at symposia
- Financial support for attending symposia
- Financial support for educational programs

- Employment or consultation
- Support from a project sponsor
- Position on advisory board or board of directors or other type of management relationships
- Multiple affiliations
- Financial relationships, for example equity ownership or investment interest
- Intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights)
- Holdings of spouse and/or children that may have financial interest in the work

In addition, interests that go beyond financial interests and compensation (non-financial interests) that may be important to readers should be disclosed. These may include but are not limited to personal relationships or competing interests directly or indirectly tied to this research, or professional interests or personal beliefs that may influence your research.

The corresponding author collects the conflict of interest disclosure forms from all authors. In author collaborations where formal agreements for representation allow it, it is sufficient for the corresponding author to sign the disclosure form on behalf of all authors. Examples of forms can be found [here](#).

The corresponding author will include a summary statement in the text of the manuscript in a separate section before the reference list, that reflects what is recorded in the potential conflict of interest disclosure form(s).

See below examples of disclosures:

**Funding:** This study was funded by X (grant number X).

**Conflict of Interest:** Author A has received research grants from Company A. Author B has received a speaker honorarium from Company X and owns stock in Company Y. Author C is a member of committee Z.

If no conflict exists, the authors should state:

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.



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