

Submitting your manuscript... and receiving a decision

Alison Bennett

Research Leader

James Hutton Institute



Associate Editor at:

Functional Ecology



Pedobiologia
Journal of Soil Ecology

Cover Letters

Editorial Office
Journal Name

Date

Dear Editorial Office,

We are submitting a manuscript entitled “Article Title” for publication in *Journal Name*. We believe that this manuscript is a very important contribution to our understanding of the factors that structure quantitative bipartite mutualistic networks.

Our manuscript addresses three novel questions: 1) Does successional stage alter network properties? 2) Do seasonal dynamics alter network properties? 3) Do successional stage and seasonal dynamics interact to influence network properties? As discussed in our manuscript, these questions are rarely addressed in bipartite networks and have never been addressed in a below-ground mutualistic networks. This manuscript demonstrates that although successional stage and seasonal dynamics do not interact, both factors influence the structure of mutualistic bipartite networks.

There are several novel results highlighted in this manuscript for both the study of mutualistic networks and arbuscular mycorrhizal fungal biology. First, there were no effects of replication suggesting that observed effects are consistent across the study site and perhaps even across other systems. Second, succession influences mutualist network structure by decreasing the number of interactions and increasing the proportion of specialists within the network. Third, the mutualism is dynamic throughout the growing season. Finally, partnerships between AM fungal and plant species change throughout the growing season. Together these results highlight the importance of incorporating successional and seasonal dynamics into the study of mutualistic networks both above- and below-ground. Thus, we feel this paper would be an excellent fit with *Journal Name*.

This submission has not been published or accepted for publication, nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. This manuscript is original and all necessary acknowledgements have been made. All authors of this manuscript have read the submitted version of the manuscript and approve its submission, and all persons entitled to authorship have been included. We also confirm our study has been reviewed by two peers (Joe Bloggs and Kevin Smith) whose names are included in the acknowledgements.

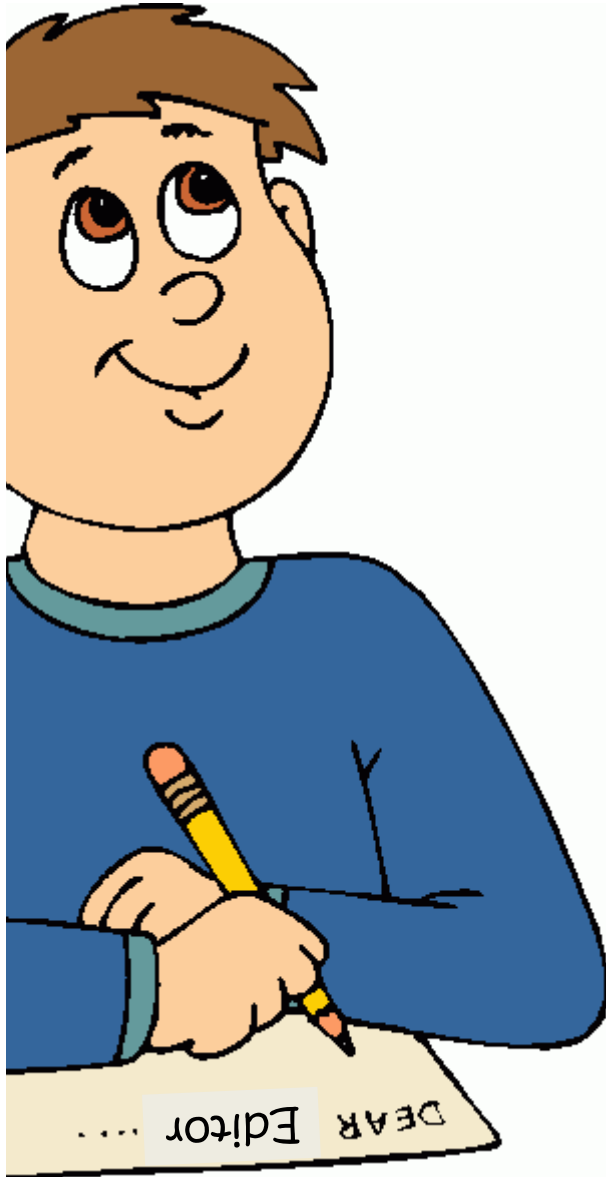
We look forward to your response,

Author 1
Address

Author 2
Address

Author 3
Address

Author 4
Address



Cover Letters

Editorial Office
Journal Name

Date

Dear Editorial Office,

We are submitting a **What are you submitting?** publication in *Journal Name*. We believe that this manuscript is a very important contribution to our understanding of the factors that structure **Short statement about it's greatness**

Our manuscript addresses three novel questions: 1) Does successional stage alter network properties? 2) Do seasonal dynamics alter network properties? 3) Do successional stage and seasonal dynamics interact to influence network properties? As discussed in our manuscript, these questions have not been addressed in a below-ground mutualistic networks. This manuscript demonstrates that although successional stage and seasonal dynamics do not interact, both factors influence the structure of mutualistic bipartite networks.

There are several novel results highlighted in this manuscript for both the study of mutualistic networks and arbuscular mycorrhizal fungal biology. First, there were no effects of replication suggesting that observations are robust to replication, even across other systems. Second, succession influences mutualist network structure by decreasing the number of interactions in the network. Third, the mutualism is dynamic throughout the growing season. Finally, partnerships between AM fungal and plant species change throughout the growing season. Together these results highlight the importance of incorporating time into the study of mutualistic networks both above- and below-ground. Thus, we feel this paper would be an excellent fit with *Journal Name*.

This submission has not been published or accepted for publication, nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. We warrant that this is our original work, and we have not submitted any version of the manuscript and approve its submission, and all persons entitled to authorship have been included. **Final paragraph contains assurances:**
Not published elsewhere, all authors have seen and agree, has been previously reviewed, etc.

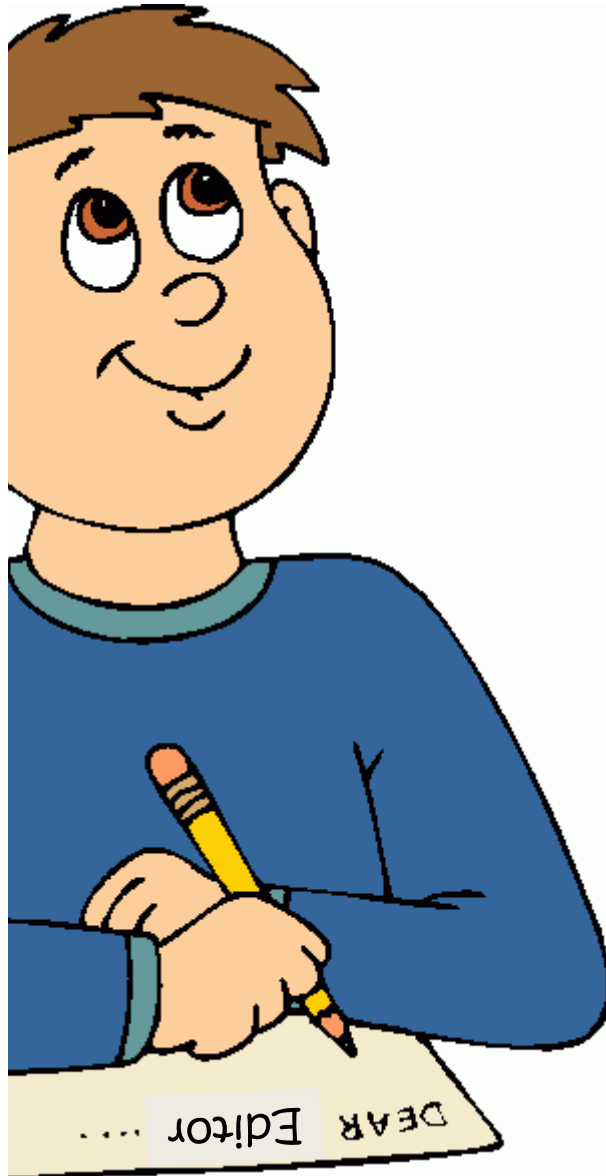
We look forward to your response,

Author 1
Address

Author 2
Address

Author 3
Address

Author 4
Address



Submitting your Manuscript

- Before you begin one last time read:
 - Journal remit
 - Author guidelines
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- Identify potential editors and reviewers
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Submitting your Manuscript

Functional Ecology

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- Step 7: Review & Submit

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Submitting your Manuscript



Submissions

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- Step 3: Authors & Institutions
- Step 4: Reviewers**
- Step 5: Details & Comments
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- Step 7: Review & Submit

Step 4: Reviewers

Reviewers

Please provide details of at least 3 preferred reviewers by entering the reviewers' details into the boxes highlighted below and click the appropriate selector 'preferred' or 'non-preferred'. If you wish to notify us of any non-preferred reviewers, again enter the reviewer's information into the boxes below and click the appropriate designation button. If you select non-preferred reviewers please explain the reason for their selection in the following letter with your submission. When you are finished, click "Save and Continue."

* = Required Fields

ACTIONS	PREFERRED	REVIEWER	INSTITUTION
<input type="button" value="Add Reviewer"/>			

If you would like to suggest up to three handling editors, please select from the drop down-menu. Please note that these will only be taken as suggestions and are entirely optional.

Select:
Edith Allen
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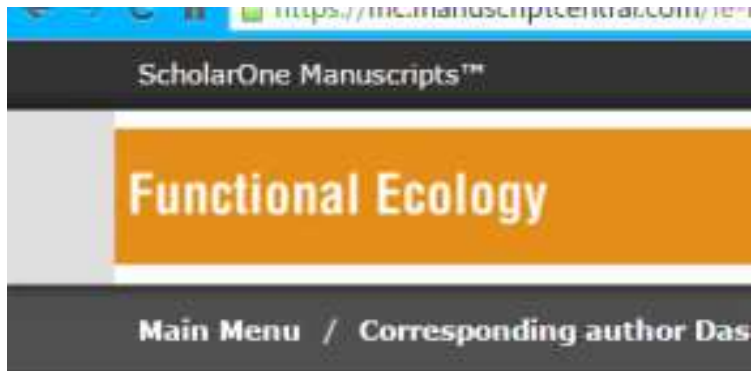
Preferred Reviewers
OR
Non-preferred Reviewers

Increase likelihood of acceptance


Identify editors that will understand the topic/importance of your paper

Increase likelihood of acceptance

Submitting your Manuscript



Review and Submit

- Most important step
- **ALWAYS** download and review your submission
 - Check for track changes
 - Do figures look correct?
 - Any glaring mistakes?
- Go celebrate! 

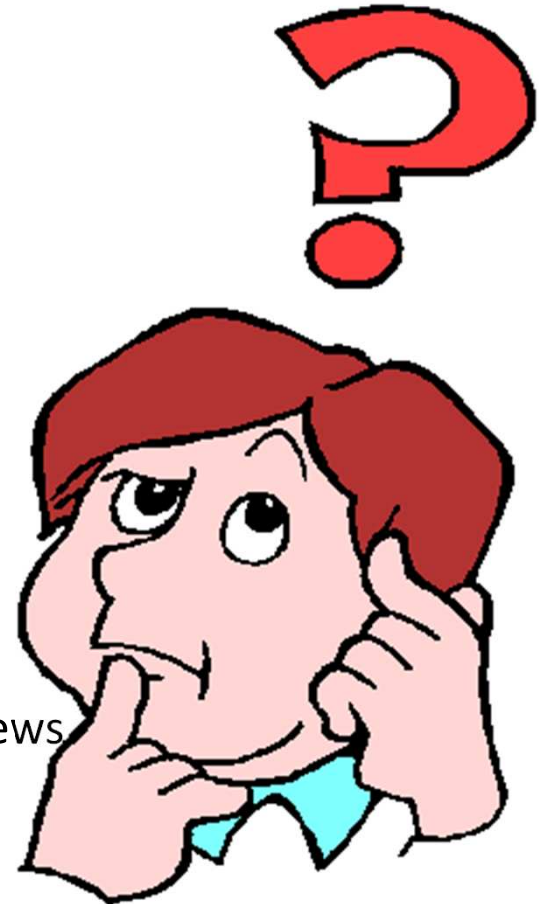
Peer Review Process

- Handling editor reads paper and asks the following questions:
 - Does it address remit of journal?
 - If no, immediate reject
 - Do the methods, etc. appear to be appropriate?
 - If no, immediate reject
 - Who should review paper?
 - Six people added to list, three invited
 - One person from Preferred Reviewer list
 - One person from each field
 - Diversity in gender, world region, career stage
 - All reviewers decline...



Peer Review Process

- Handling editor receives 2-3 reviews:
 - Reads reviews
 - Comments for only editor
 - Comments for both author and editor
 - Handling editor decision based on:
 - Issues raised by reviewers
 - Quality of reviews
 - Reviewer recommendations
 - Own opinion
 - Possible decisions
 - Accept (NEVER happens...)
 - Major revisions
 - Minor revisions
 - Reject with invitation to resubmit
 - Reject—but pass on to associated journal with reviews
 - Reject



Receiving a Reject Decision

- “Never call up/email an editor after you’ve received a decision and call them an idiot.”
 - Wait until you are calm
 - Did they really make a mistake?
- Petition
 - Be VERY polite and avoid phrases like “you are wrong”
 - Expect 30% success rate
- Or is there a flaw in the paper you can address for the next submission?
- **ALWAYS** address reviewers comments before you submit to the next journal



Receiving a Major/Minor Revisions Decision

- Celebrate!
- Carefully read all reviewers comments
 - Reviewer's goal: to improve your manuscript
 - Respond to every comment by editor/reviewers
 - Tips for responses to reviewer comments:
 - Be polite
 - » reviewers often get to read your responses and decide if you have addressed comments appropriately
 - Explicitly number each comment and list where in text (use line numbers) changes have been made
 - Make every possible change requested
 - » Limit the number of comments you contest to as few as possible
 - » Avoid phrases like “you are wrong”
 - Utilize co-authors to help tone down any confrontational responses



Writing your manuscript

a.k.a. The fun part

Daniel B. Stouffer
School of Biological Sciences
University of Canterbury
Christchurch, New Zealand
www.stoufferlab.org

Structuring your article:

1. Four main components (IMRAD)
Intro, Methods, Results, & Discussion
2. Create an ‘‘hourglass’’ shape
3. ‘‘The 5 pivotal paragraphs’’
4. Start with your Figures (and Tables)
5. Work on the Methods and Results next

Picking a title:

1. Don't be too system specific...
2. ...but too general leaves readers stranded.
3. Highlight the key question or result(s)
Knowledge of predator-prey interactions improves predictions of immigration and extinction in island biogeography
4. Be creative/playful to catch readers' eyes
Des différences, pourquoi? Transmission, maintenance and effects of phenotypic variance

Writing the abstract:

1. Often last; never least.
2. The structured abstract is not your enemy.

_____ and _____,
but _____,
therefore [we] _____.

As a result, _____.

3. Give away the punchline!

Please be good enough to put your conclusions and recommendations on one sheet of paper at the very beginning of your report, so that I can even consider reading it.

-- Winston Churchill

Effective writing style:

1. Tell a story
2. Clarity, coherence, and concision
3. Choose your words with care
4. Use plain English
Don't utilize utilize; use use.
5. Favor the active voice
6. Used short or mixed-length sentences
(≤ 30 words)
7. Design each of your paragraphs

Editing your article:

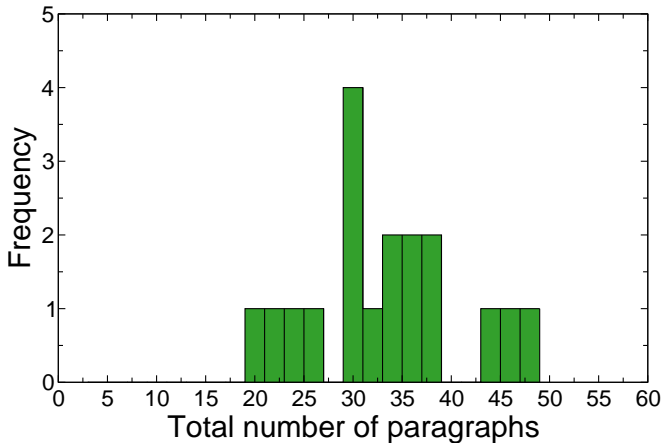
1. Brush up on the basics
2. Beware the urge to write the perfect sentence, paragraph, etc.
3. Seek the opinions of others
4. Keep an open mind
5. Lather, rinse, repeat (*as needed*)

Authorship:

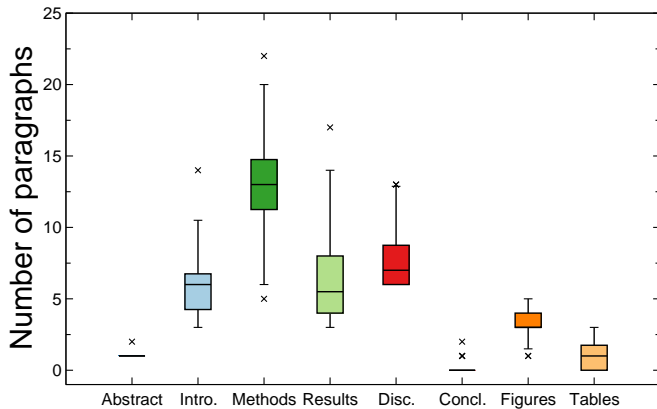
1. When in doubt, rely on the advice of others
ICMJE criteria for being an author:
 - Formulation of theory and prediction
 - Contributions to experimental conception and design
 - Acquisition, analysis and/or interpretation of data
 - Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
2. Approach the question positively
3. Honesty is the best policy
4. Learn about the cultures to author order

You don't have to build the Taj Mahal.

You don't have to build the Taj Mahal.



You don't have to build the Taj Mahal.



Key references:

The craft of scientific writing

Michael Alley

Writing science in plain English

Anne E. Greene

Houston, we have a narrative

Randy Olson

Stylish academic writing

Helen Sword

The write stuff

Henry Gee (<http://goo.gl/jrhV4w>)

The elements of style

Strunk & White

The 5 pivotal paragraphs in a paper

Brian McGill (<https://goo.gl/lwcM9K>)