

Editorial



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Proceedings B 2016: the year in review

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Proceedings B continues to maintain its strong reputation as one of the leading organismal biology journals in the world. During 2016, we upheld our practice of rapid publication of high quality articles that are of broad interest in the biological sciences. This year, articles took on average 78 days to final acceptance and the mean time from date of submission to first decision was just 32 days, reinforcing *Proceedings B*'s well-deserved reputation for rapid and efficient peer review while maintaining high editorial standards.

Our citation metrics remain competitive with an impact factor of 4.8 and the journal is ranked 9th in the Journal Citation Reports category for 'Biology', has a SCImago Journal Rank of 2.375, and a Source Normalized Impact per Paper (SNIP) of 1.269. This year *Proceedings B*, along with other Royal Society journals, included a citation distribution graph on the journal website in order to more transparently display the range of citations to articles published in the journal. It is encouraging to see that several other publishers have now followed this example and included this information on their own journal pages. However, this is no time for complacency with new journals springing up annually, many in direct competition with *Proceedings B*, and in 2017 we will continue to work hard to attract to the journal the most exciting and novel research in the biological sciences.

Proceedings B has implemented a number of new initiatives in the last year to ensure that we remain at the forefront of scientific publishing and continue to provide the highest possible service for our authors, reviewers and readers. We have continued our association with Publons, which allows our reviewers to gain recognition and credit for the work that they undertake for us. As of November 2016, when this editorial was written, over 750 reviews have been uploaded to the Publons site, and almost 20% of reviewers for the journal have opted into using this service since the integration went live in September 2015. In January, we brought in a new policy requiring submitting authors to register for an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier and to use it at submission. ORCIDs supply a unique identifier for authors, distinguishing individual researchers across multiple platforms. In September 2016, we announced a new integration with figshare. For several years, electronic supplementary files published alongside articles in *Proceedings B* have been published Open Access, and integrating our system with figshare now allows us to deposit all electronic supplementary files on publication, making data and information more searchable. *Proceedings B* publishes articles on a wide range of sub-disciplines in the biological sciences and another innovation for 2017 is that articles in the journal will be grouped by subject area in the Table of Contents so that readers can quickly locate content of particular interest to them.

A significant number of submissions to *Proceedings B* involve 'good science' but are not considered novel, or of sufficient general interest to our readership. Of the 1445 articles rejected from *Proceedings B* to date in 2016, 630 authors were offered the opportunity to have their manuscripts transferred to *Royal Society Open Science*, the Society's new open access journal that publishes across all areas of science. Manuscripts and reviews can be forwarded directly to the journal editors and the journal offers speedy decisions and the usual high quality production process that is a feature of all Royal Society journals.

In 2016, *Proceedings B* continued to maintain our reputation for publishing excellent review articles, many of which become highly cited. This year's fascinating Darwin Review by Joel Brown provided a novel perspective by showing 'Why Darwin would have loved evolutionary game theory' [1]. Our annual

Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution Review, from last year's CSEE Presidential Award Winner Graham Bell, addressed the issue of whether major ecological transitions in the history of life can be studied in the laboratory in his article on 'Experimental Macroevolution' [2]. Near the end of this year, a Special Feature on 'The value of biodiversity in the Anthropocene', edited by Nathalie Seddon and Rachel Cavanagh, was published providing a comprehensive overview of issues surrounding the evaluation of biodiversity as well as conservation challenges currently being faced globally on the preservation of biodiversity [3]. We are particularly interested in receiving proposals for review papers in *Proceedings B* and I encourage readers to consider sending us your ideas (see <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/reviews>). Reviews must be synthetic with novel perspectives and we particularly encourage reviews that provide innovative analyses of published data.

Proceedings B is a journal for the biological community and as such we are always happy to get feedback from our authors, readers and reviewers. This year, in consultation with several members of the human ecology, evolution and behaviour community, we have revised the wording of the scope statement on our website in order to make it crystal clear that studies on human biology are within the scope of the journal. We are also particularly keen to receive articles in the burgeoning fields of disease ecology and evolution, global change biology, urban ecology and evolution, and genome biology.

As I mentioned in last year's annual editorial [4], one of our main goals over the next few years is to redress the gender imbalance on the editorial board of *Proceedings B* so

that it better reflects our readership. Accordingly, we have focused on ensuring that we identify and invite key female scientists to join the board. I am pleased to say that our efforts during 2016 have been rewarded. This year we recruited 25 new Associate Editors for 2017, of which 24 are women. This brings the total number of women on the editorial board to 54 (39%), which is the highest representation to date (recent female representation: 2014—25%; 2015—24% and 2016—28%). We will continue with these efforts to improve gender balance on our board during 2017.

I would like to welcome all the new Associate Editors to the editorial board, and I look forward to working with you over the coming few years. I would also like to thank all our current editorial board members for their outstanding contributions to the journal, and in particular all the Associate Editors who will be retiring from the board at the end of this year. Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the journal. We could not run such a successful journal without the support of our editorial board and I am very grateful for your contributions. Thanks also go to the in-house support from our editorial office team, consisting of Editorial Coordinators Jennifer Kren, Buchi Okereafor and Alice Power, and Senior Production Editor Radha Dutia, for the well-organized and high quality author service and journal production they provide to ensure that *Proceedings B* runs smoothly and efficiently. And lastly I am especially grateful to Rhiannon Meaden, Senior Publishing Editor of *Proceedings B*, for her support, conscientiousness and wise counsel that have made my life as Editor-in-Chief over the past year a most pleasurable and rewarding experience.

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