



Publication Ethics for The Canadian Field-Naturalist

Last updated: November 2011

Natural history has been less prone to academic misconduct than other fields of research, but naturalists are merely human and are thus prone to mistakes and errors of judgement. This statement is intended to communicate the expectations of The Canadian Field-Naturalist (CFN) regarding ethical behaviour by our publisher, editors, reviewers, and authors. Readers interested in publication ethics are encouraged to visit the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE; publicationethics.org), which along with Elsevier's ethical guidelines (www.elsevier.com/wps/find/authorsview.authors/rights) provided a template for our own statement.

Expectations of the publisher (The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club):

- Define the relationship between publisher, editor, and others on the journal team.
- Respect editorial independence.
- Respect privacy (of authors, reviewers, etc.).
- Protect intellectual property and copyright.
- Support editors in meeting CFN's ethical obligations.
- Assist investigations into scientific misconduct (e.g., by authors' employers).
- Publish clarifications, corrections, and retractions.
- Publish issues on a timely basis.

Expectations of the editors:

- Decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based on the paper's importance, originality, clarity, validity, and relevance to our journal's aim and scope.
- Ensure appropriate experts are selected as reviewers.
- Respect authors' requests to avoid using certain people as reviewers for their article, as long as the requests are justified and reasonable.
- Ensure the peer review process is fair, unbiased, and timely.
- Preserve reviewers' anonymity, unless a reviewer chooses to make their name known to authors.
- Ensure non-peer-reviewed sections of our journal are clearly identified as such.
- Follow transparent procedures to ensure articles authored by people associated with CFN (e.g., editors) receive unbiased evaluation.
- New editors should not overturn decisions to publish submissions made by the previous editor unless serious problems are identified.
- Publish guidance to authors on everything that is expected of them. This guidance should be regularly updated and should refer or link to this CFN ethics statement.
- Publish relevant competing interests for all contributors, and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication.
- Publish submission and acceptance dates for articles.



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Publisher of The Canadian Field-Naturalist

- Refuse to publish research conducted unethically, including research causing unjustified harm to animals, carelessly harming vulnerable populations, or taking specimens from their rightful owners. Editors may deem research unethical even if it was approved by an institution's animal care committee.

Expectations of reviewers:

- Inform the editor of potential competing interests before agreeing to review a manuscript.
- Complete and submit the review by the agreed-upon deadline. If meeting this deadline becomes impossible, contact the editor promptly to let them know.
- Reviewers who feel unqualified to review a manuscript should notify the editor promptly and excuse themselves from the review process.
- Maintain confidentiality of manuscripts under review. Reviewers should not show or discuss in-review manuscripts' content with others without prior consent from the editor. Likewise, reviewers cannot use ideas or knowledge obtained from reviewed manuscripts for personal gain.
- Alert the editor and author to any relevant published work not cited in the manuscript. This includes cases of substantial overlap in data, figures, text, or findings.
- When suggesting relevant citations, reviewers should strive to provide complete citations.
- Be critical but constructive and respectful. Criticism should be targeted at the manuscript and not at the authors personally. Be especially constructive with student and amateur authors who might be new to publishing and eager to learn; we want to cultivate more naturalists not frighten them away.

Expectations of authors:

- The research, visualizations, and writing should be the authors' own original work. If others' work has been used it must be appropriately cited or quoted.
- Do not submit the same or substantially similar manuscript to multiple journals concurrently, nor should authors submit manuscripts that have been published elsewhere.
- Authorship includes, but is strictly limited to, people who made significant contributions to the conception, design, execution, interpretation, and/or writing of the study.
- The corresponding author has ensured all co-authors have approved of the submitted version of the manuscript.
- Provide sufficient detail so others can replicate the research.
- Properly cite and reference all research that influenced the nature of the research.
- Disclose any hazardous materials or procedures used in the research, destructive sampling protocols, and whatever permits were obtained to conduct the research.
- Disclose any financial or other conflicts of interest that might be thought to bias authors' interpretation. Likewise, disclose all sources of financial support for the research.
- Data connected to a manuscript should be kept for as long as possible after the manuscript is published, and ideally contributed to publicly-accessible databases when appropriate to facilitate further natural history research.
- If the authors discover a significant error or inaccuracy after their manuscript is published, they are obliged to inform the editor and cooperate with them to correct or



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retract the paper. If others discover a significant error or inaccuracy, authors are obliged to cooperate with the editor and publisher to respond to the criticism and if the editor deems necessary retract or submit a correction for the paper. If authors do not cooperate the editor reserves the right to act themselves.