

EDITORIAL

Ecology Letters has undergone a meteoric rise since its creation in 1998 to being the most highly cited ecological journal in 2007. With 100% of editorial decisions being on-time, an average time to first decisions on manuscripts of only 22 days, and a subsequent time to online publication of only 29 days in 2007 (49 days for print publication), *Ecology Letters* has also altered the way in which ecological journals operate. The rise of *Ecology Letters* spurred competing journals to tackle the fossilization of manuscripts on the desks of editors and reviewers, and the near-epochs manuscripts spent between acceptance and publication. The high quality of published articles, their conciseness and topicality also make *Ecology Letters* one of the most readable ecological journals. These successes come in large part from the dedication of Michael Hochberg, who founded and served as Editor-in-Chief of *Ecology Letters* for the last decade. Critical during this time was Michael's openness to suggestions, ability to work with others, and determination to do the right thing even if there was a risk of offending colleagues. Michael's guidance and wisdom, supported by a world-class editorial board and consistent strong provisioning and nurturing from Wiley-Blackwell and the French CNRS have given the ecological community a first class venue in which to disseminate their best work. Michael is now returning to his research endeavors while continuing to provide expert guidance to the journal.

The success of *Ecology Letters* brings its own challenges. Submissions reached approximately 1200 manuscripts in 2008, and reviewers are increasingly overburdened. These factors frequently make it difficult to find reviewers for submitted manuscripts, and to adequately represent editorial decisions on manuscripts to authors. A further challenge for the journal is to maintain a good subject balance, which is of interest to the broad ecological community and both foreshadows and echoes major new research directions. Ecology as a discipline is becoming more applied and diffusely separated from social and physical environmental sciences. Increasingly, ecologists seek to answer questions about conservation, ecosystem management and global change and to integrate human behaviour and activities. Society is placing increased value on sustainability and prudent natural resource management. Furthermore, new topics and even subdisciplines are regularly emerging in ecology, from the adoption of techniques like GIS and molecular genetics to expanding the spatiotemporal scales and number of species considered. For instance, bioinformatics, remote sensing, molecular techniques, remote camera trapping, phylogenetics, genomics, macroecology, bioeconomics, invasion ecology, metacommunities and disease ecology have all expanded greatly within the last decade.

We are responding to these changes in two ways: (i) we will expand the editorial board to over 100 members within the next year and (ii) we will encourage the publication of articles in subdisciplines that are under-represented within the journal (along with continuing to publish in core areas of ecology). The prime factor determining which subjects are appropriate is that articles should be of broad interest to open-minded ecologists and evolutionary biologists. As is made clear in the Instructions for Authors, topics need to address fundamental questions or hypotheses in ecology and evolution, or to answer major applied questions. As well as inviting authors to consider submitting a broader range of articles, we will solicit invited Reviews and Synthesis, and Ideas and Perspectives in key areas of ecology in which we seek an increased number of submissions. We encourage readers to watch these sections with this in mind.

I am excited and confident that *Ecology Letters* will continue to take the lead in addressing the many challenges that lay ahead in publishing in ecology, and I look forward to listening to how we can improve the service we provide to readers and to authors.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to receiving your finest and most exciting manuscripts.

Marcel Holyoak
Editor-in-Chief