

EDITORIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NON-PEER REVIEW SECTION

AVOIDING POTENTIAL CONFLICTS: EDITORS PUBLISHING IN HCB

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Herpetological Conservation and Biology (HCB) considers it important to be objective and unbiased in the review system. We emphasize acceptance of manuscripts, including those by our own staff, based on anonymous peer reviews. Although an unwritten rule, we believe that Editors (e.g. assistant, associate, section, managing editors, and the editor-in-chief) and Governing Board members should not dominate the contents of any journal (i.e., be a self-serving publication outlet). To assay this situation, I counted the number of scientific articles from authors compared to the proportions by our editorial staff and Governing Board. If a paper had both a senior author and junior author, I included it in the tally only once. I excluded all non-peer reviewed material such as announcements, editorials, and introductions to Classic papers.

HCB staff authored approximately 8% of the 370 papers (Table 1). Members of the Governing Board contributed some manuscripts but mostly at our outset (Table 1). Governing Board members published two

papers after Volume 3 and none currently have a manuscript in process with HCB. Overall, contributions by members of the Governing Board comprise 2.4% of the articles published in HCB since its inception. Although not shown, at least two manuscripts submitted by Governing Board members were rejected through our anonymous peer review system. This demonstrates that HCB staff does not receive special treatment in the editorial process.

The manuscripts that were in process prior to the release of this issue included 40 received (one with HCB Associate/Assistant editor as senior author), 48 in revision (none by HCB editors), and 24 in press (one with an editor as senior). Thus, less than 2% of unpublished manuscripts were authored by members of the editorial staff.

We have a large editorial board to share the wealth of reviews. During their time of tenure, editor contributions comprise approximately 6% of the articles in HCB. This drops to 4% when considering only senior

TABLE 1. Number of manuscripts published or being processed since the inception in 2006 of *Herpetological Conservation and Biology*. Columns compare total production versus papers authored by members of the Governing Board or Editors.

Volume	Articles Published			Manuscripts by Members of Governing Board			Manuscripts by Associate or Assistant Editors		
	Total	Non-staff	%	Total	Senior	Junior	Total	Senior	Junior
1-3	72	58	80.6%	7	4	3	10	7	3
4-7	186	172	92.5%	2	1	1	12	7	5
Current	112	110	98.2%	0	0	0	2	2	0
Total	370	340	91.9%	9 (2.4%)	5 (1.4%)	4 (1.1%)	24 (6.5%)	16 (4.3%)	8 (2.2%)

Announcements: Editors publishing in HCB.

authorship. Most of these were in Volumes 1–3.

I could not calculate the percentages of contributions by Governing Board members or editors for all submitted manuscripts because we do not retain lists of authors for rejected manuscripts. We currently have 112 submitted manuscripts and HCB published 258 articles since its inception. Our acceptance rate is approximately 50%, so we have considered approximately another 250 papers since 2006.

Overall, the Governing Board and editorial staff do not dominate the production of manuscripts in HCB. Each is welcome to submit papers and shall receive the same level of scrutiny as any other contribution.

Manuscripts submitted by members of the Governing Board are handled by editors anonymously to avoid conflicts of interest. We cannot predict future submission rates, but I do not believe editor-submissions are an issue, as long as these contributions remain below 10% per volume. We at HCB strive for continued fair, rigorous, and timely assessment of manuscripts. All submitted manuscripts are evaluated based on scientific merit alone.