

Editorial: *Proceedings B* – a journal for organismal and population biological work of broad interest

Over the last decade or so, *Proceedings B* has strengthened its position as one of the major journals publishing high-quality papers in the broad field of biology with some emphasis on organismal and population biology. We aim at publishing papers of interest to a broad spectrum of readers, including those applying such knowledge within management and conservation. The impact factor has had a good positive trend (figure 1a) rising from 2.8 in 1994 to the current value of above 4. This positive development is, at least partly, due to more papers being submitted, enabling us to select intensely and thereby increasing the quality even further: today, we reject approximately 80 per cent of the submitted manuscripts, many of which are very good; hence, we publish only the best of the very good papers submitted to *Proceedings B*.

A major proportion of the papers published in *Proceedings B* is within the field of evolution (figure 1b), approximately 40 per cent of which are within population biology (i.e. using ‘population’ or ‘populations’ as keywords; see legend to figure 1). In the mid-1990s, few papers were on ecology; since then, however, the proportion of papers within the field of ecology has increased to more than 10 per cent (figure 1b); of the ecology papers, approximately half are on population biology.

Organismal and population biology insights—ecology, genetics and evolution—are important for proper (sustainable, if you like) management of our natural living resources:

- *Population ecology*—the study of structure and function of populations over space and time—is important; this includes the statistical modelling of long-term data coupled with theory development (including mathematical modelling) and experimental testing of assumed/hypothesized processes.
- *Genetic structure of populations*—the way a species is geographically structured, both at a large and small geographical scale—is important if we are to understand the population biology of a species.
- *Evolution*—both through natural and artificial selection (including harvesting-induced evolution)—of the individuals comprising the populations is, of course, important if we are to understand the ecological dynamics of the populations.

If we biologists are to have an impact on the management of the living natural resources exposed to anthropogenic threats under global change, we need to be more directly involved in the application of such basic knowledge as referred to above; most of all, we need the involvement of our very best biologists, such as those publishing their work in *Proceedings B*. Without making *Proceedings B* an applied journal (which it definitely should not become), I would personally like to see more of our best scientists publishing papers in

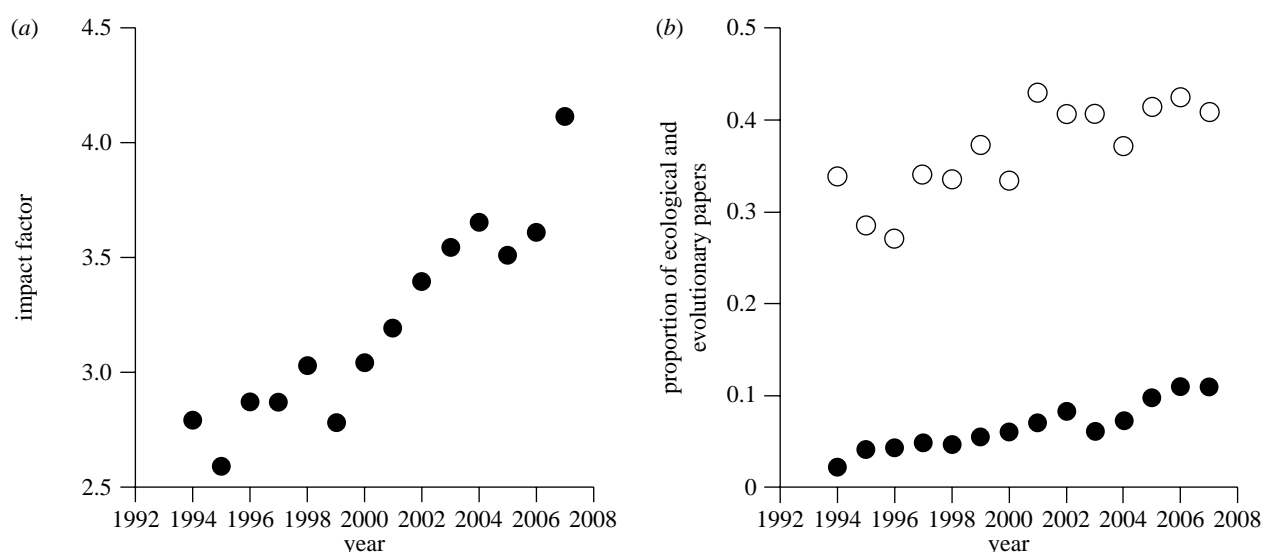


Figure 1. (a) The development of the impact factor for *Proceedings B* over the period 1994–2007. (b) The proportion of articles using ‘ecology’ as a keyword (filled circles) and ‘evolution’ as a keyword (open circles). The numbers entering into (b) was based on searching the ISI database for the given years using ecology and evolution as keywords, respectively, and *Proceedings of Royal Society of London Series B: Biological Sciences* as well as *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* journal names (the former applicable primarily prior to 2004 and the latter following 2004).

Proceedings B that report the application of the most up-to-date ecological and evolutionary insights to the many threats to our living resources caused by people's ever increasing impact on our biosphere—be it directly (e.g. harvesting) or indirectly (e.g. climate change). Also, if we, as biologists, are to be effective in advising those responsible for managing (and protecting) our living resources, we need to consider the costs and benefits of these resources.

I have been involved with *Proceedings B* for more than a decade, partly as an author (my first papers in the journal were published in 1995) and partly as a Board Member and an Editor. I hope that the journal will continue to flourish and, thus, continue to publish high-quality papers. It will do so if authors continue to submit good manuscripts: the more good submissions, the easier it is to ensure those selected being important ones (but the more easily we as editors upset the authors of rejected papers). As part of this, I hope *Proceedings B* will continue to strengthen its position within the broad field of organismal and population biology, and include basic work within these fields that addresses the increasingly important current issues linked to global climate change.

In short, I hope *Proceedings B* will be a journal which scientists as well as science advisors to governments must read every fortnight.

Nils Chr. Stenseth