

Enhancing Editorial Standards and Introducing the New Checklist Section of the Ethnobiology and Conservation

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As the editors-in-chief of Ethnobiology and Conservation, we would like to highlight significant changes implemented to enhance our editorial standards and introduce a new section, the CHECKLIST.

In recent years, we have observed an increase in the number of articles submitted for review to the journal. However, it is essential to acknowledge that approximately 60% of these articles undergo desk rejection before entering the peer-review process. This rejection rate underscores the need for a more rigorous review of submission criteria.

Ethnobiology and Conservation has established clear criteria for articles to be considered for peer review to ensure the quality and relevance of published articles. These criteria include adherence to editorial guidelines, appropriate formatting, research relevance and impact, and scientific rigor. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments in ethnobiology, and check out the recent proposal documents (see Albuquerque et al. 2023, 2024a, 2024b; McAlvay et al. 2021; Vandebroek et al. 2023). These are essential for anyone looking to publish in this area, as they provide clear guidance to best practices for conducting and reporting on ethnobiology research.

We draw inspiration and paraphrase Orr and Vandebroek (2023) to provide ten recommendations aimed at facilitating the smooth navigation of the peer-review process for papers submitted to Ethnobiology and Conservation:

1. Evaluate whether the manuscript aligns with the journal's focus by consulting the guidelines for authors provided by Ethnobiology and Conservation. Ensuring that the manuscript addresses topics central to the journal's mission and scope is essential.
2. Adhere meticulously to the author's guide-

lines, as non-compliance often delays publication. Ethnobiology and Conservation have specific formatting requirements for papers, including in-text citations and references, which must be followed for peer review.

3. In the introduction, clearly articulate the novelty and innovation of the research, emphasizing its contribution to ethnobiology or Conservation. Explain how the paper addresses gaps in the literature and advances the field.
4. Formulate straightforward research questions or hypotheses and ensure the objectives are well-defined throughout the manuscript. Reviewers assess whether the paper effectively addresses these objectives.
5. Provide comprehensive details in the materials and methods section to ensure the reproducibility of the study. Describe all research steps, including sampling procedures, clearly.
6. Use sensitive language to respect cultural nuances. Avoid terms that may be insensitive or derogatory, and consider the cultural context when describing the findings.
7. Provide an in-depth analysis of the research data beyond plant and animal lists. Ethnobiology and Conservation emphasize the need for contextual analysis and theoretical contributions to the field.
8. Evaluate the necessity of ethnobiological indices in the study and justify their use based on methodological or theoretical contributions. Avoid indiscriminate use of indices without compelling justification.

9. Prioritize clear and concise scientific writing to avoid publication delays due to unclear or grammatically incorrect writing. If necessary, seek assistance from colleagues proficient in scientific writing.
10. Write for a broad audience by situating the manuscript within the global literature and avoiding overly technical language. Minimize acronyms and guide readers through the manuscript's main storyline to ensure readability.

Following these recommendations, remember to enjoy the writing process and allow ample time for drafting, revising, and refining the manuscript. By adhering to these guidelines, the submission will progress smoothly through the peer-review process.

Additionally, we are pleased to announce the launch of the new CHECKLIST section. This section is a repository for original research articles presenting lists of species known and utilized in specific socio-ecological contexts. We aim to support the development of studies seeking patterns in the relationship between people and nature, such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

The CHECKLIST section will only accept articles providing comprehensive information on the social, cultural, and ecological aspects of the studied sites, as well as on the sampling procedures and specimen identification. Manuscripts will be considered if the list comprises at least 80% of species identified at the species level and encompasses studies of at least regional scope.

Guidelines for CHECKLIST

We invite original research articles that present lists of species known and utilized in specific socio-ecological contexts. We aim to serve as a repository for high-quality, list-generating research that can support the development of studies seeking patterns in the relationship between people and nature (e.g., systematic reviews and meta-analyses). We will only consider papers that provide comprehensive information on the social, cultural, and ecological aspects of the studied sites, as well as on the sampling procedures and specimen identification. Given our primary goal of delivering robust species-use lists, manuscripts will only be considered if the list comprises at least 80% of species identified at the species level. We only accept lists beyond the local scale but encompass studies of at least regional scope.

Study-Area Characterization

Authors are strongly encouraged to pay particular attention to the study-area description. Mandatory information includes:

- The name of the studied community(s), settlement(s), or analogs, and the higher administrative units (e.g., municipality, province, region, and country).
- Geographical coordinates of the study area. If, for some reason, the authors believe this information should be omitted from the manuscript, they must explain their reasons in the cover letter.
- Community size (number of people or number of families in the studied community(s) or region(s)).
- Ethnical characterization of the studied communities and their main economic or subsistence activities (e.g., agriculture, wild food plant harvesting, tourism).
- The environmental context of the study area (biome or ecosystem, mean temperatures, and precipitation).

Sampling Procedures

Regardless of the type of research, authors should explain how they selected interviewees/participants. Mandatory information includes:

- Type of sample (e.g., random sampling, theoretical sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling). Studies that performed a census instead of sampling must include this information in the manuscript.
- Sampling unit (e.g., individuals, families, households).
- Exclusion criteria (e.g., exclusion of children and adolescents).
- Universe and sample size (total number of individuals, families, or households and the number of interviewed people).
- When the sampling unit is the family or household, the manuscript must indicate how interviewees were selected (e.g., joint interviews with all family members, only the most knowledgeable member on a given subject).

Studies developed with a subgroup of the community(s) (e.g., local specialists, healers, hunters) should avoid generalizing their findings to the entire community(s).

Plant and Animal Collection and Identification

The authors should mention the institutions where the collected biological material was deposited. In the case of plants, it is necessary to refer to the collector's number or deposit number of each specimen. For animals, zoological material recorded should be collected and deposited in scientific collections, and a voucher number should be indicated. If obtaining zoological material is impossible, ethnozoological studies should use a checklist of animal species based on published works on animals conducted in the surveyed area.

In conclusion, these updates to our editorial standards and introducing the new CHECKLIST section signify our commitment to maintaining the highest quality of research published in *Ethnobiology and Conservation*. We encourage researchers to embrace these changes and contribute to advancing the fields of ethnobiology and Conservation through their valuable contributions.

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Received: 03 March 2024

Accepted: 03 March 2024

Published: 07 March 2024