

# Submission Guidelines: “The Scientific Naturalist”

Papers in “The Scientific Naturalist” section of *Ecology* should be written to appeal to both a scientific and a non-scientific audience. Submissions about animals, plants, fungi, or microorganisms are all welcome.

These papers should:

- Use photographic evidence to illustrate a fascinating and not-well-known organism, behavior, process, or other natural phenomena of communities, food webs, and ecosystems that will inspire and engage the reader in natural history by representing a scientific “aha” or “wow” moment.
- Describe something new or important in ecology, evolution, conservation, phenology, or human-environment interactions that challenges existing theories, generates new hypotheses, and/or raises open questions.

Submissions should be brief and explain why the observations are scientifically interesting or significant, including at least one striking, high-quality and high-resolution photo or video documenting an interesting or previously unknown aspect of an organism's life cycle or ecology. In addition to the media, a simple table or figure of data that points in the direction of new questions or plausibility of new hypotheses is strongly encouraged.

The manuscript should not just cover previously published work. The observation should indicate something distinctly new and important and not be a one-time observation. Additionally, the manuscript may be a good way to announce an observation that will lead to subsequent papers.

For freely available examples of recent papers in “The Scientific Naturalist” series, see the January issue of the current volume of *Ecology*. [Tschinkel and Wilson \(2014\)](#) is also useful for a general overview of writing about natural history.

Submissions will be reviewed and edited for scientific content as well as the quality of both the writing and photograph by a Subject-matter Editor devoted solely to this manuscript type. The Subject-matter Editor's review is based on equal consideration of the scientific interest and writing quality and of the artistic quality and natural history significance of the accompanying photo or video.

You must follow these additional requirements for this manuscript type:

- The entire paper should consist of no more than 12 manuscript pages (from the title page through the final figure) following our [manuscript preparation guidelines \(PDF\)](#).
- Statements of precedence (e.g., "first report of X") should be avoided.
- The photo caption should give the time, date, location, and other pertinent information about the photo such as that recorded in a field notebook.
- The first one or two paragraphs of the body of the text should call the reader's attention to the photo, describe the natural history observation it depicts, and explain how the authors came to be at the right place to make this observation.
- By the third paragraph of the body of the text, authors should begin to develop some wider background about the natural history.
- The manuscript should conclude with some open questions or new hypotheses for further research that arise from this natural history observation.
- Any video, audio, or additional photographs that are not part of the main manuscript must be submitted as supporting information or provided in a permanent repository (following our [Open Research policy](#) guidelines) to ensure the material will be available in perpetuity. YouTube, Google Drive, Flickr, and other similar storage sites are not considered permanent sites for publication and cannot be used.