Publishing your way to success

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Overview

- Why publish?
- How to write a good paper
- The reviewing process
Why publish?

- Communicate.
  - Get feedback
  - Help solve problems collaboratively.

- Build your research credentials
  - New TT hires in North American R1s (2016-18) had a mean of 9.5 pubs (range = 3 – 38)
  - Mean number of 1st author pubs in leading journals (IF >3) was 4.4 (0 – 14)

  – Fox, 2020, *Bull. ESA*

![Bar chart showing last three job searches in UConn EEB](chart.png)
What makes a good paper?

Robust science

Novelty

Communication

All decent journals

More important in High Impact Journals
Hour-glass model and the Five Pivotal Paragraphs

1. Eternal Question
   - set your net to catch your reader
2. Narrow to your question(s)
   - What will the reader learn?
3. What important thing did you find?
   - Answer to 2.
4. Implication?
   - Progress to answering eternal question
What journal do you think you’ll submit your first paper to? And why?
Choosing an appropriate journal

- Fits into scope?
  - Similar papers published? Your references?
- Appropriate format
  - MS length? Ideas piece? Data paper?
- Good reputation
  - impact factor, unquantifiables
- Publication cost
  - Write into grants if possible
- Turn-around time?
  - Scooping danger? Job application?
What have you heard about the peer-review process?
The peer review process
The decision

- Accepted
- Minor revisions
- Major revisions
- Rejected, but can resubmit
- Rejected and cannot resubmit
Revising and Responding

- Reviewers are ALWAYS right:
  - Flaw: **Fix it!**
  - Misunderstanding: **Reword/redraw to clarify!**
  - Conflict of interpretation: **Resolve**
- Stay positive it’s (usually) not personal
- 75% of published papers are in the 1st journal submitted to.
- Papers that have been rejected once get more citations when published
Overall tips

- Think about the story
- Cut to the chase
- Be rigorous.
- Be reviewer friendly
  - Think like a reviewer (and review!)
- Don’t give up.

Good luck
Some blogs

- Brian McGill’s tips from Dynamic Ecology
  - https://dynamicecology.wordpress.com/2016/02/24/the-5-pivotal-paragraphs-in-a-paper/

- Pulitzer winning author Cormac McCarthy’s tips on writing a great paper
  - https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02918-5