

# Overcoming the publishing obstacle: Learning to enjoy writing

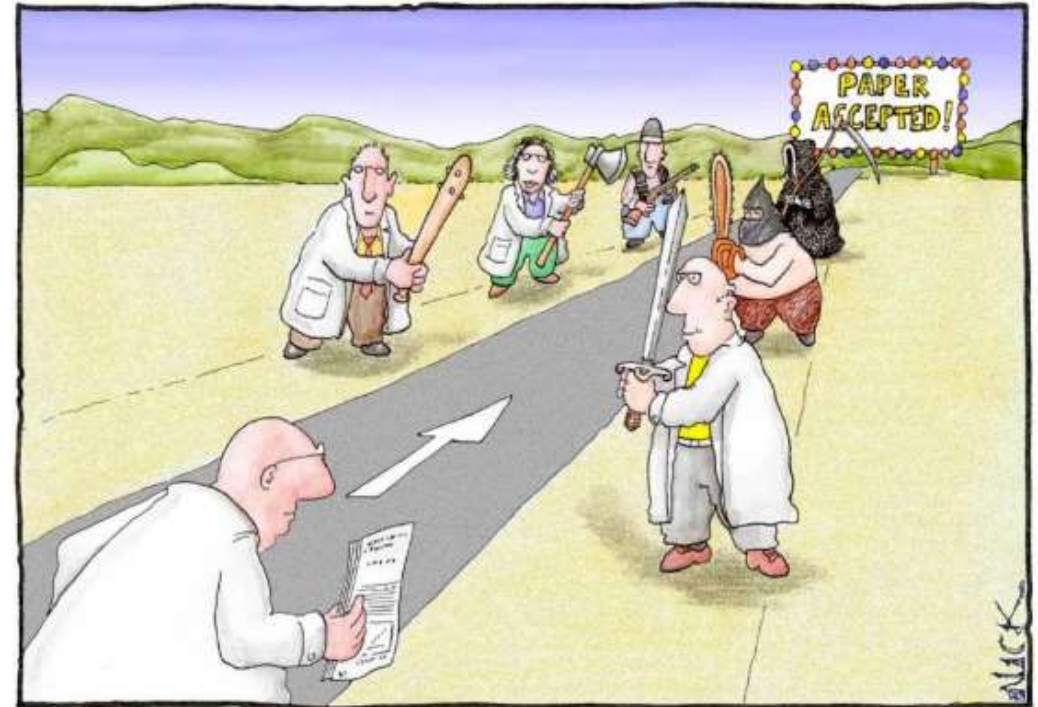


WRITING: THE THING THAT HAPPENS IN BETWEEN EXHAUSTING  
YOUR DEADLINE AND EXHAUSTING YOURSELF.

Research Skills  
Workshop  
3-4<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
H-J Hawkins,  
UCT, CSA

# Outline

1. Why publish?
2. Set yourself up to succeed
3. Before writing your paper
4. The writing cycle
5. The publishing cycle
6. Responding to reviewers
7. Success! Getting your article noticed
8. Online resources



# 1. Why publish?

- For the **curiosity-driven**: Contribute to a continually evolving model of how the world works
- For the **altruistic**: Contributing to shared and useful knowledge
- For the **ambition-driven**: Get you and yourself cited in the scientific community (more about citations later)
- In all cases – the value of science is in **shared information**

## 2. Set yourself up to succeed

Choose an area of research you **enjoy!** Then plan your research around a mechanistic **hypothesis**. Tell a **story**. **Analyze** data as you go since new stories may emerge. **Tinker**.

**Learn to enjoy the writing process through practice** (write 30-60min per day, e.g. reports, proposals, thesis chapters, papers)



Well-written & coherent scientific paper



Appropriate  
statistical  
analysis

Robust experimental  
design

Well-framed research question

Review the literature



Scopus

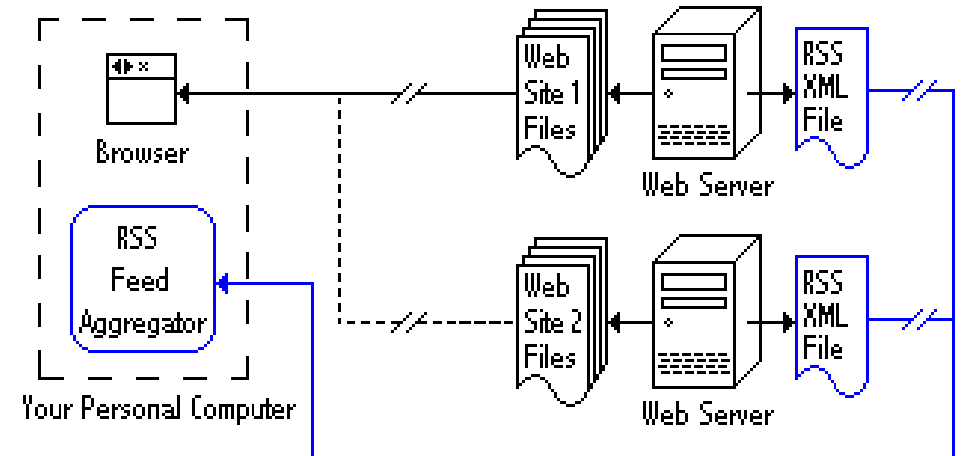
19410 journals



# Review the literature

The **number of journals** is increasing so use **feeds** and email alerts to send content **to you**

- Based on key word searches
- Need a RSS Reader e.g. RSSOwl  
<http://www.rssowl.org/>



# Example

Search all fields | Author name | Journal or book title | Volume | Issue | Page | Advanced search

Search results: 284 results found for pub-date > 2013 and "holistic" AND "planned" AND "grazing"[Journals(Agricultural and Biological Sciences,Earth and Planetary Sciences,Economics, Econometrics and Finance,Environmental Science,Social Sciences)].

Save search alert | RSS

Refine filters

Year

2016 (89)

Download PDFs | Export

Relevance

All access types



Grazing lands in sub-saharan Africa and their potential role in climate change mitigation: What we do and don't know

June 2016

atjes, Randall Boone, Rich Conant, Jonathan Davies, Niall Hanan, Jesse Njoka, Moffatt Ngugi, Bill Parton, Keith Paustian, Robin

ent

olistic management

Search Feed Name: ScienceDirect Search: "holistic" AND "planned" AND "grazing"

Use the URL below to subscribe to this feed in your RSS reader.

<https://rss-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/getMessage?registrationId=HGCDHHCEOICMLGDJJGDJHMELIGGLILKINPDDJNIFKA>

If you already use one of these readers, subscribe with one click

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# ...a word about authors

Q. When do you compile the author list?

Q. Who should be an author?

**Vancouver Convention (1978)**

[www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org)

## **Substantial contributions to**

1. The conception or design of the work; OR the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work OR revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work

Note: Those eligible via 1. and involved in the implementation of the work, should not prevent others who are eligible via 1. from participating in 2,3 and 4.



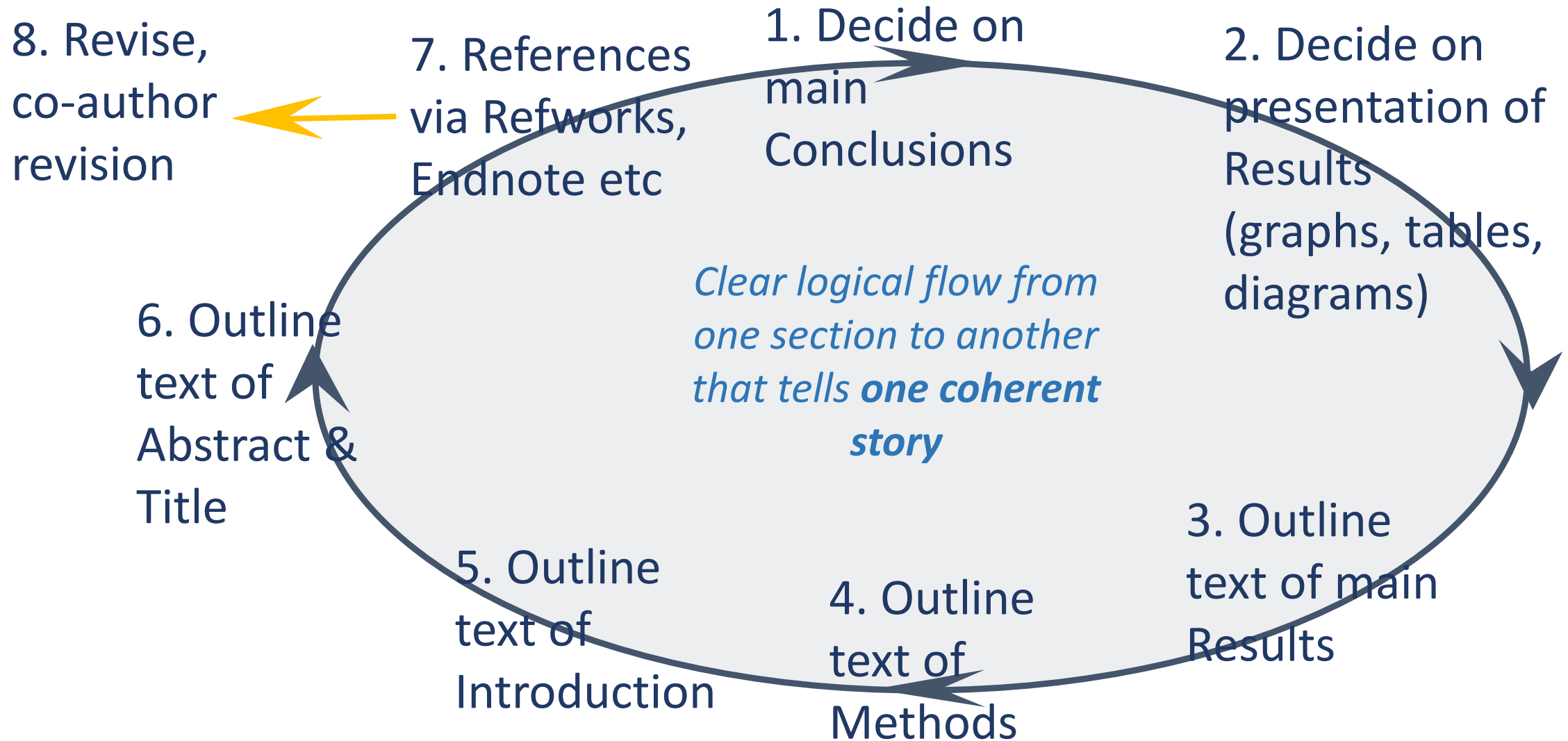
# 1. Before writing your paper

- Determine if you are ready to publish your work
  - Original results or method or
  - Significant enhancement of published work or
  - Up-to-date review
- Decide on the type of manuscript
  - Full research article, short communication, review
- Choose your target journal
  - Journal info and finders: [Scimago](#), [Springer](#) or [Elsevier](#)
  - Aim and Scope match your work?
  - Impact Factors in line with your work? Aim for  $\geq 1$
- Follow the Guide to Authors meticulously



Example of journal metrics from [Applied Soil Ecology](#)

# 3. The 'backwards' writing cycle

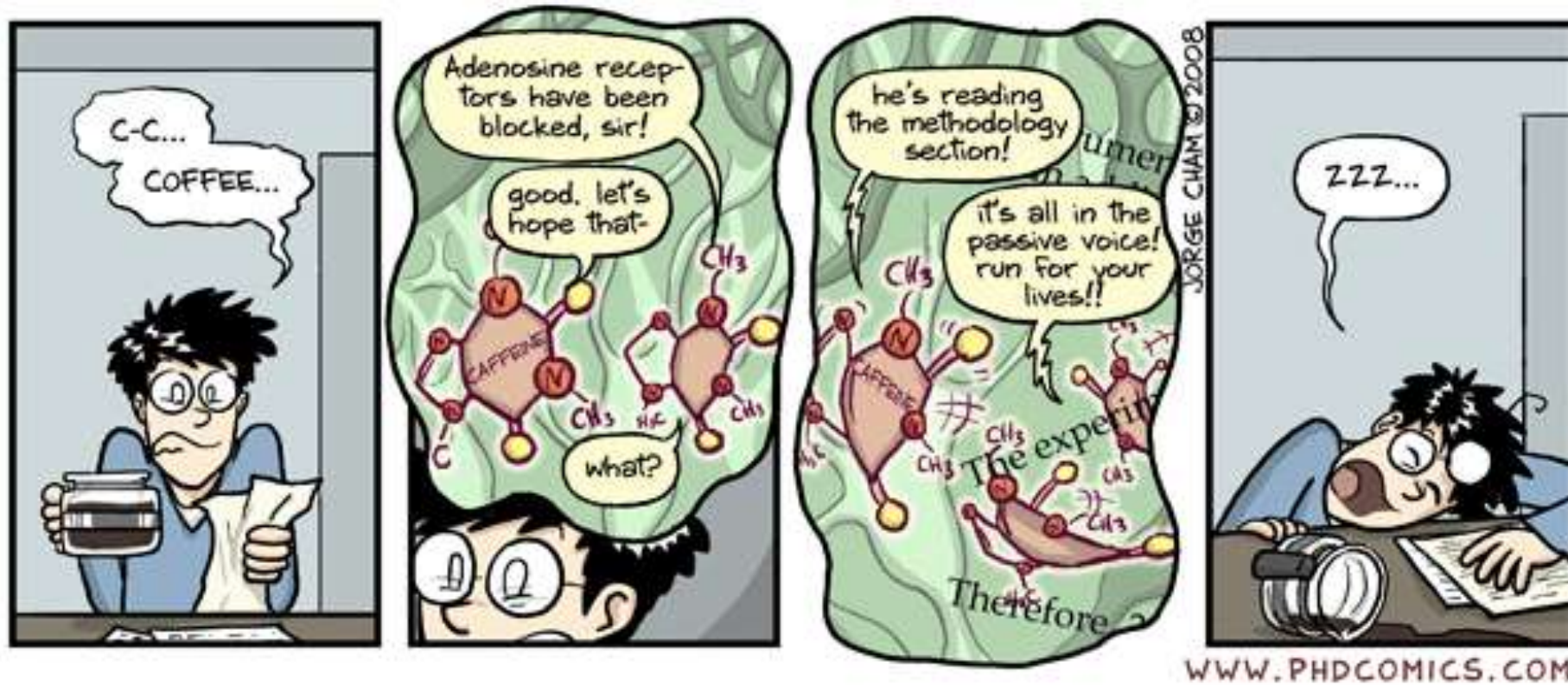


# Approach to scientific writing



Aim to **inform**, not impress and write simple sentences in the **active** voice.

Q. What is the passive voice?



# The active voice makes strong sentences

- Use **verbs** not **verb equations** such as 'there was/is/are...xxx-ing'  
Puts **subjects** before **objects** in the sentence

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
The results did not <b>depend</b> on ...	The results <b>were independent of</b> ...
Management <b>correlated</b> strongly with production	<b>There was</b> a strong correlation between management and production
<b>Low basal cover</b> increases the risk of erosion	The risk of <b>erosion is increased by</b> low basal cover

## TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WRITING CONSISTENTLY BORING PAPERS

AVOID FOCUS

AVOID ORIGINALITY AND PERSONALITY

WRITE L-O-N-G CONTRIBUTIONS

LEAVE OUT ILLUSTRATIONS

OMIT NECESSARY STEPS OF REASONING

USE MANY ABBREVIATIONS AND JARGON

DEGRADE BIOLOGY TO STATISTICS / DON'T TELL STORIES

QUOTE NUMEROUS PAPERS FOR SELF-EVIDENT STATEMENTS

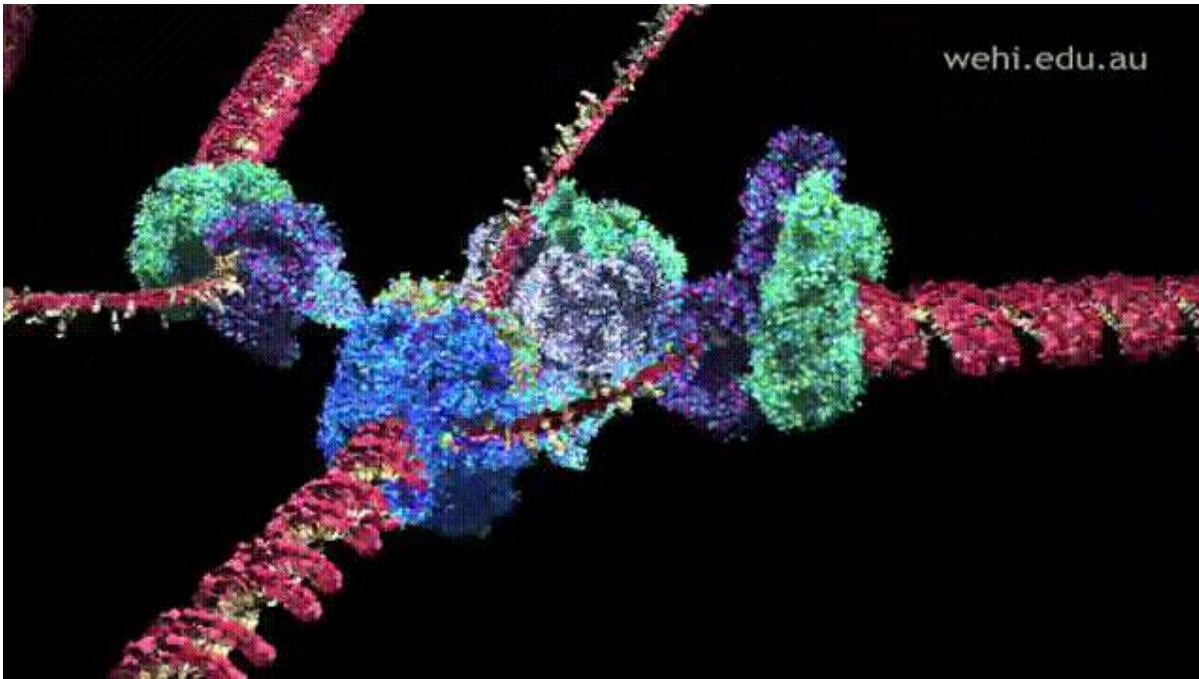
SUPPRESS HUMOUR AND ALL FLOWERY LANGUAGE

REMOVE ALL IMPLICATIONS AND SPECULATIONS

Modified from: Sand-Jensen K 2007 How to write consistently boring scientific literature *Oikos* 116, 723-727

# Implications, speculation and the Nobel Prize

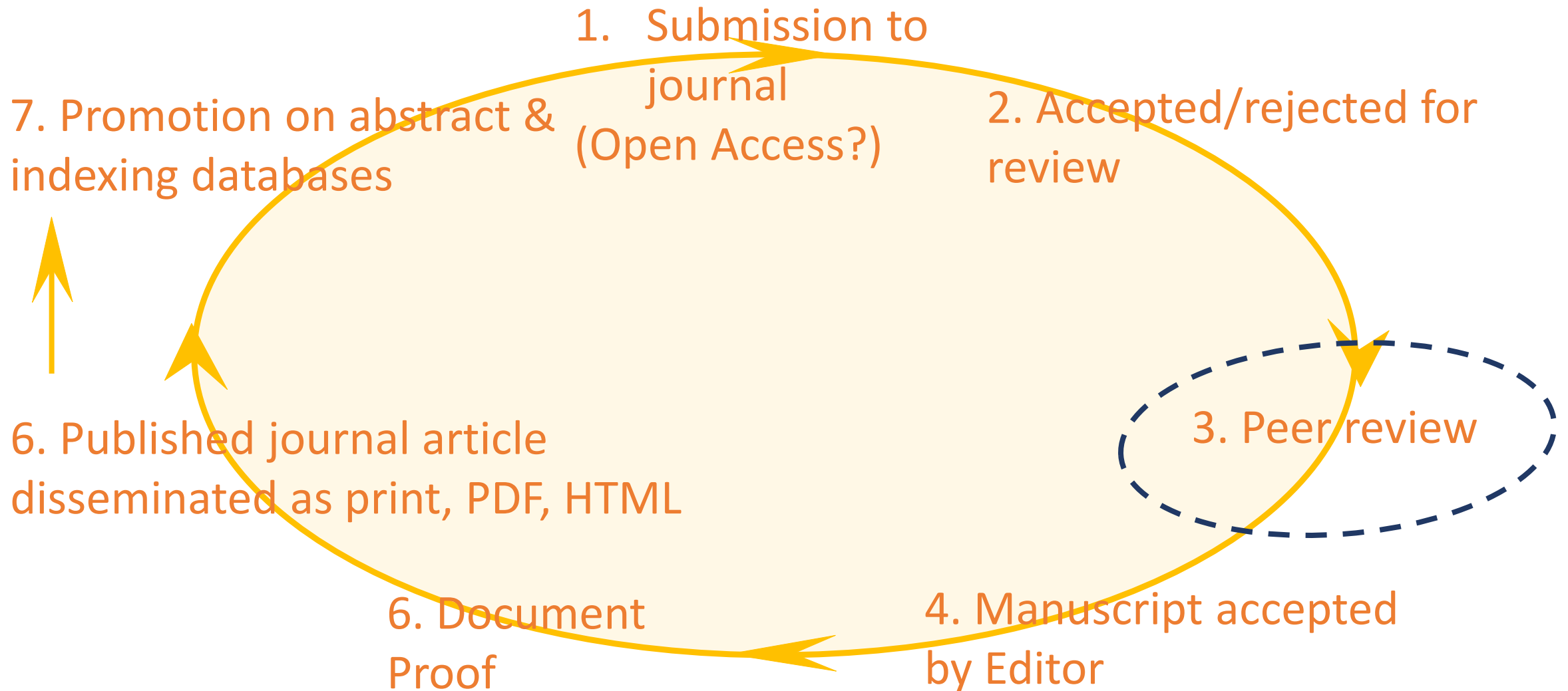
“It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material.” Watson JD & Crick FH 1953 Molecular structure of nucleic acids. Nature 171, 737-738.



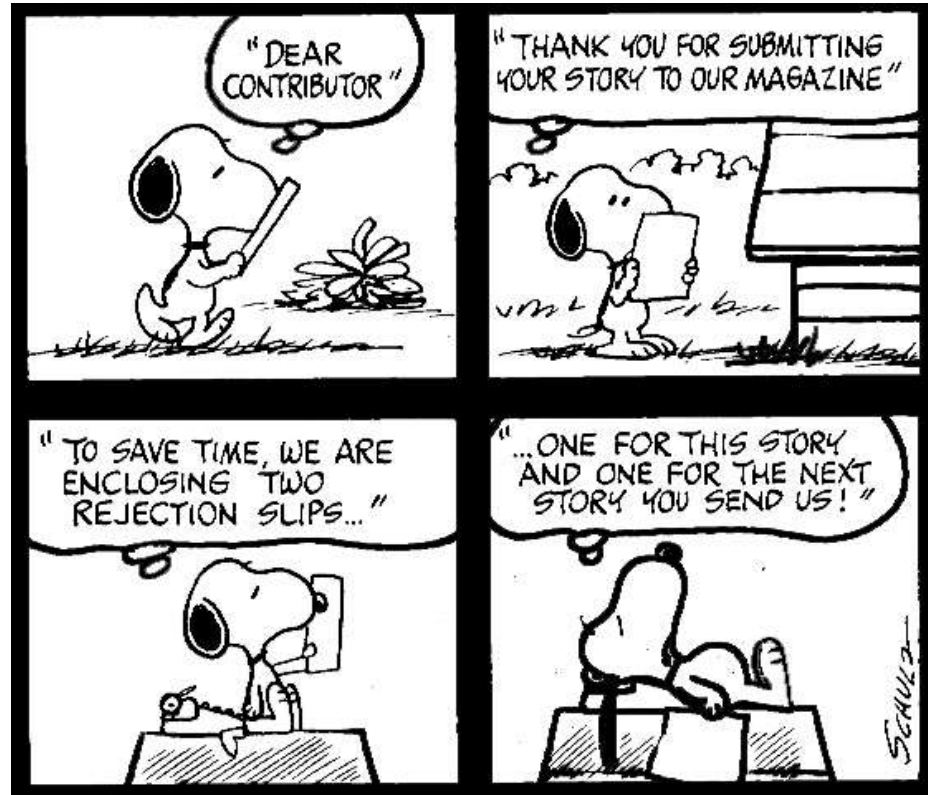
Point out the **implications** of your work if you want it to be **recognized** and to avoid someone else getting the credit later on.



# 4. The publishing cycle



# 5. Responding to reviewers



The review process is tough but central to quality control since 1600's:

1. Rejected without review (desk reject)
2. Accept (rare)
3. Minor revision
4. Major revision
5. Reject

- Stay calm
- Read the comments
- Re-read the comments
- Get a colleague to read the comments
- Take a break
- Make a table of comments and changes required
- Start revising
- Draft a response letter that details the response to EVERY comment with page and line numbers
- GOLDEN RULES
  - Be polite (they do this for free)
  - Be thorough
  - Answer with evidence and extra data if required, especially when disagreeing



# Resubmit or go elsewhere?

- Read the **Editors letter** as a guide
- Never submit the same version of the article elsewhere
- Always **use** the reviewers comments



# “7 reasons why I rejected your article”

1. It does not fall within the Aims and Scope
2. It's incomplete
3. The procedures and/or analysis of the data is seen to be defective
4. The conclusions cannot be justified on the basis of the rest of the paper
5. It's is simply a small extension of a different paper, often from the same authors
6. It's incomprehensible
7. It's boring

## “...Reasons why I accepted your article”

- It provides insight into an important issue
- The insight is used to develop a framework or theory
- The insight stimulates new, important questions.
- The methods used to explore the issue are appropriate (for example, data collection and analysis of data).
- The methods used are applied rigorously and explain why and how the data support the conclusions.
- Connections to prior work in the field or from other fields are made
- The article tells a good story,

Dr. Joseph Astrachan and Dr. Torsten Pieper, Editors of the *Journal of Family Business Strategy*

Be **polite** and deal with **every comment** with page and line references

## ADDRESSING REVIEWER COMMENTS

BAD REVIEWS ON YOUR PAPER? FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES AND YOU MAY YET GET IT PAST THE EDITOR:

### Reviewer comment:

"The method/device/paradigm the authors propose is clearly wrong."

### How NOT to respond:

✗ "Yes, we know. We thought we could still get a paper out of it. Sorry."

### Correct response:

✓ "The reviewer raises an interesting concern. However, as the focus of this work is exploratory and not performance-based, validation was not found to be of critical importance to the contribution of the paper."

### Reviewer comment:

"The authors fail to reference the work of Smith et al., who solved the same problem 20 years ago."

### How NOT to respond:

✗ "Huh. We didn't think anybody had read that. Actually, their solution is better than ours."

### Correct response:

✓ "The reviewer raises an interesting concern. However, our work is based on completely different first principles (we use different variable names), and has a much more attractive graphical user interface."

### Reviewer comment:

"This paper is poorly written and scientifically unsound. I do not recommend it for publication."

### How NOT to respond:

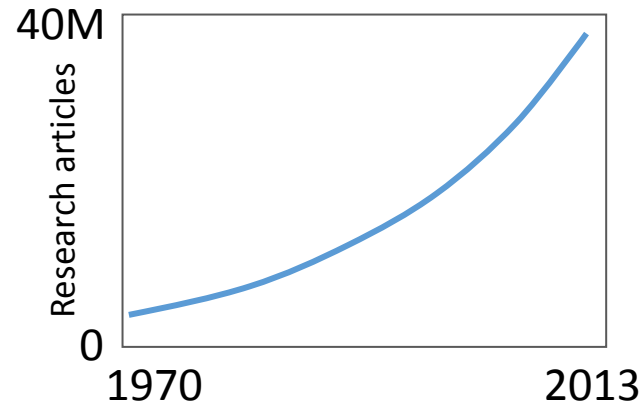
✗ "You #&@\*% reviewer! I know who you are! I'm gonna get you when it's my turn to review!"

### Correct response:

✓ "The reviewer raises an interesting concern. However, we feel the reviewer did not fully comprehend the scope of the work, and misjudged the results based on incorrect assumptions."

[www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com)

# 7. Success! Now get your article noticed...



1. Preparing your article



2. Promoting your published article



3. Monitoring your article





Go to old article view

# Journal of Ecology

British Ecological Society  
[Explore this journal >](#)

Standard Paper

## Restoration of a megaherbivore: landscape-level impacts of white rhinoceros in Kruger National Park, South Africa

Joris P. G. M. Cromsigt, Mariska te Beest

First published: 12 February 2014 [Full publication history](#)

DOI: 10.1111/1365-2745.12218 [View/save citation](#)

Cited by: 9 articles [Refresh](#) [Citing literature](#)

Am score 117

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- On 2 Facebook pages
- Referenced in 1 Wikipedia pages
- 63 readers on Mendeley

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View issue TOC  
Volume 102, Issue 3  
May 2014  
Pages 566–575

erbivores have been lost from most ecosystems world-wide, and current increases in poaching of rhino and elephant spp. threaten their status in the systems where they still occur. Although megaherbivores are said to be key drivers of ecosystem structure and

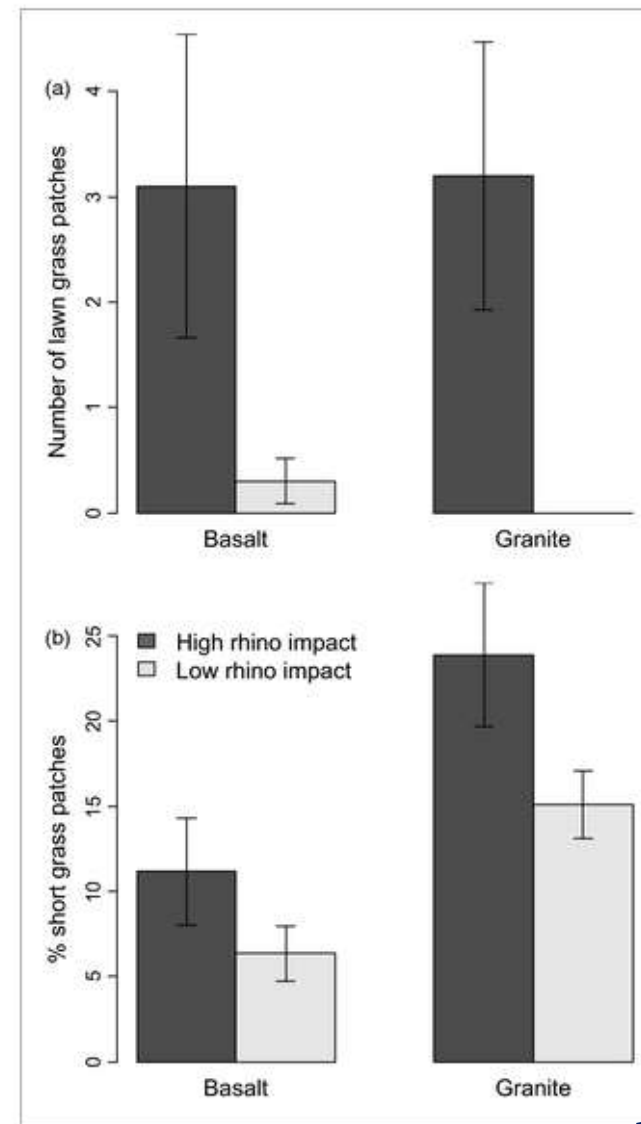
**Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**  
Keywords in the title, key words, Abstract & captions

Citations and scoring (in this case from Wiley, shows impact



High quality graphics that tell a story at a glance “Poaching rhinos changes landscape”

Supplementary material (Downloadable Powerpoint slide, audio slides, data sets)



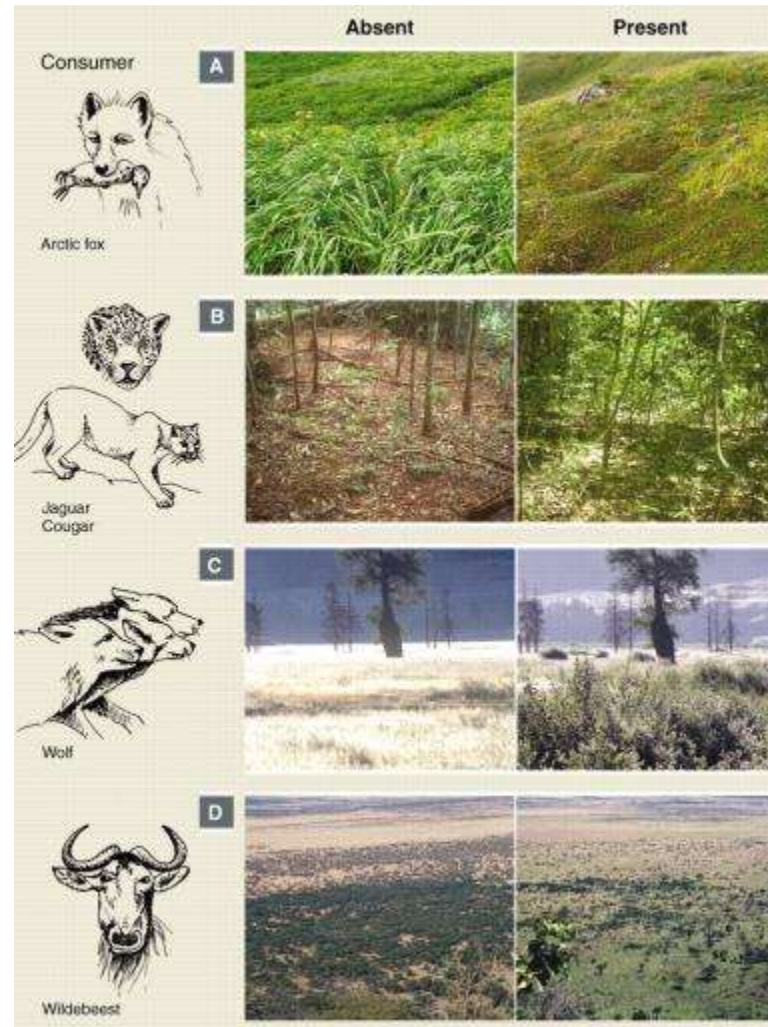
**Figure 3.**

[Open in figure viewer](#) | [Download Powerpoint slide](#)

(a) Average number of lawns per 750-m transects. We found no lawns in the low rhino area on granites. (b) Proportion of 750-m transects covered with short grass patches ( $\geq 50\%$  grass cover and grass height  $< 7$  cm). Bars show the mean values and whiskers the standard errors

Pictures tell a thousand words

And include **keywords** in your pictures!



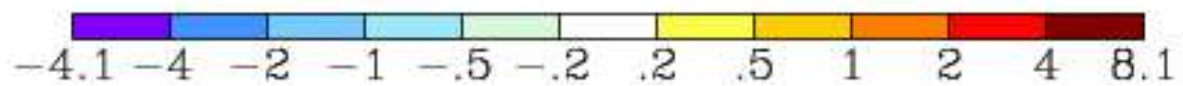
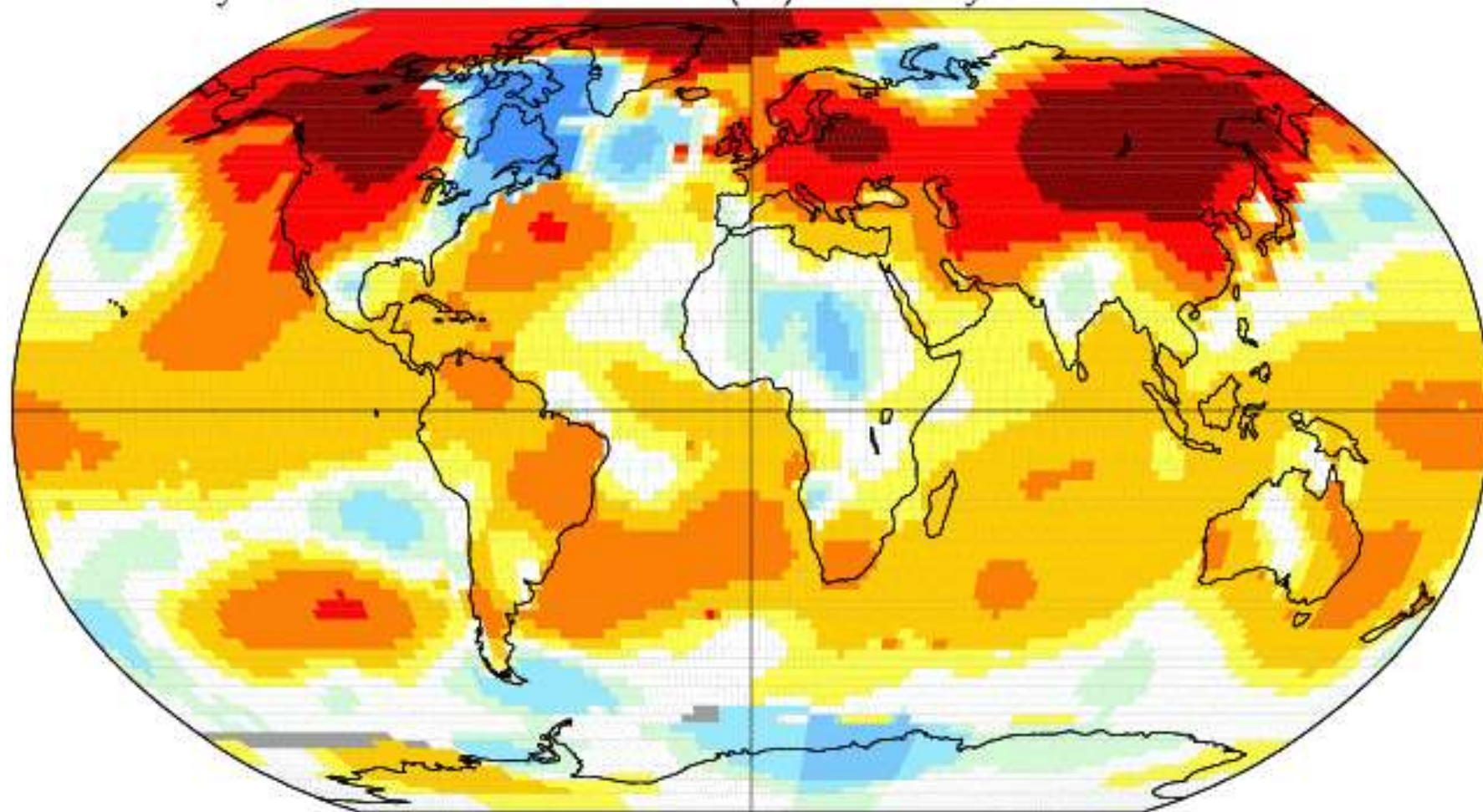
James A. Estes et al. Science 2011;333:301-306

Fig. 2 Landscape-level effects of trophic cascades from four terrestrial ecosystems.

January 2015

L-OTI(°C) Anomaly vs 1951-1980

0.81






Some journals offer online innovations such as **graphical Abstracts** and **Highlights** which is your chance to attract readers. Try vector graphic like :

Inkscape (freeware)  
<https://inkscape.org/en/>

Or  
Mind the Graph  
<http://mindthegraph.com>

Purchase Export Search ScienceDirect Advanced search

 **Journal of Insect Physiology**  
Volume 57, Issue 9, September 2011, Pages 1312–1316

**Moulting of insect tracheae captured by light and electron-microscopy in the metathoracic femur of a third instar locust *Locusta migratoria***

Edward P. Snelling<sup>a</sup>, Roger S. Seymour<sup>a</sup>, Sue Runciman<sup>b</sup>

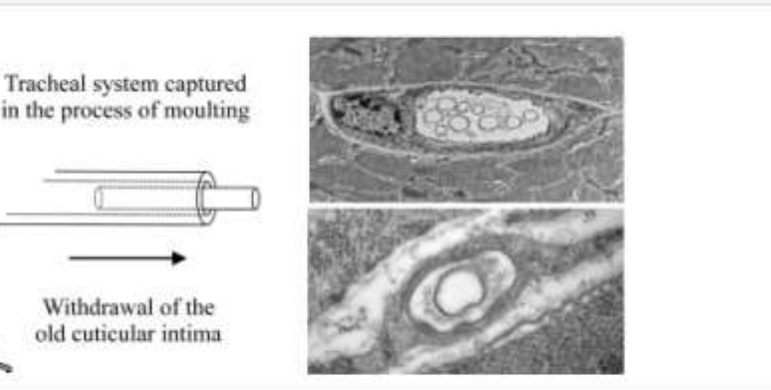
Show more

Choose an option to locate/access this article:

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**Graphical abstract**



Tracheal system captured in the process of moulting

Withdrawal of the old cuticular intima

**Highlights**

► Light and electron-micrographs of moulting insect tracheae are presented. ► Both

SCImago Journal Rank (SJR): **1.001**



Impact Factor: **2.644**

5-Year Impact Factor: **3.105**

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Mary K. Musyoki | Georg Cadisch | ...

[Responses of soil nematodes to water and nitrogen additions in an old-field grassland](#)

Min Song | Xiaoming Li | ...

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  4. Edu
  
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**Metrics** measure your **impact** based on your productivity and citations. The [h index](#) is the highest number of papers that have each received at least that number of citations (Hirsch 2005).

[Google Scholar](#)

[Scopus](#)

[Web of Science](#)

NOTE: Good assessment means experts in your field read what you have done, not bean-counting.

<u>Articles</u>	<u>Citation numbers</u>	
1	33	
2	30	
3	20	
4	15	
5	7	
6	6	= h-index
7	5	
8	4	



# Mendeley Stats

My publications Publication date (newest)

Visualization of co-readership patterns from an online reference management system  
Kraker, P., Schlägl, C., Jack, K., Lindstaedt, S.  
*Journal of Informetrics*, vol. 9 (2015) ELSEVIER  
[View stats](#)

(Citation needed): Filling in wikipedia's citation shaped holes  
Jack, K., López-García, P., Hristakeva, M., Kern, R.  
*CEUR Workshop Proceedings*, vol. 1143 (2014)  
[View stats](#)

A comparison of two unsupervised table recognition methods from digital scientific articles

Item	Citations	Readers	Views
Visualization of co-readership patterns from an online reference management system	2	74	784
(Citation needed): Filling in wikipedia's citation shaped holes	0	8	

Each item will have its own statistics on display. The amount of information we can display depends on where your work was published.

2:17 / 3:56



# Monitoring your article

## Metrics: - as seen in Science Direct

 **The Lancet Global Health**  
Volume 1, Issue 6, December 2013, Pages e371–e379   
[Open Access](#)

### Articles

## The drug and vaccine landscape for neglected diseases (2000–11): a systematic assessment

Dr Belen Pedrique, MD<sup>a</sup>,  , Nathalie Strub-Wourgaft, MD<sup>a</sup>, Claudette Some, PharmD<sup>b</sup>, Piero Olliaro, MD<sup>c, d</sup>, Patrice Trouiller, PharmD<sup>e</sup>, Nathan Ford, PhD<sup>f</sup>, Bernard Pécoul, MD<sup>a</sup>, Jean-Hervé Bradol, MD<sup>g</sup>

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doi:10.1016/S2214-109X(13)70078-0

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**Refers To** Jürg Utzinger, Jennifer Keiser  
**Research and development for neglected diseases: more is still needed, and faster**  
*The Lancet Global Health, Volume 1, Issue 6, December 2013, Pages e317-e318*  
 PDF (92 K)

**Referred to by** Zoë Mullan  
**Some things change, some stay the same**  
*The Lancet Global Health, Volume 1, Issue 6, December 2013, Page e310*  
 PDF (80 K)

### Recommended articles

**Research and development for neglected**  
2013, The Lancet Global Health [more](#)

**Drug development for neglected diseases**  
2002, The Lancet [more](#)

**Th9 Cells Drive Host Immunity against G**  
2013, Immunity [more](#)

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### Citing articles (0)

### Related book content

### Metrics



-  9 news outlets
-  5 blogs
-  172 Tweepsters
-  8 Facebook users
-  1 Wikipedia page

# Monitoring your article

## Metrics: - as seen in Scopus

The drug and vaccine landscape for neglected diseases (2000-11): A systematic assessment [Back to article](#)  
(2013) The Lancet Global Health, 1(6), pp. e371-e379

Overview

Citations

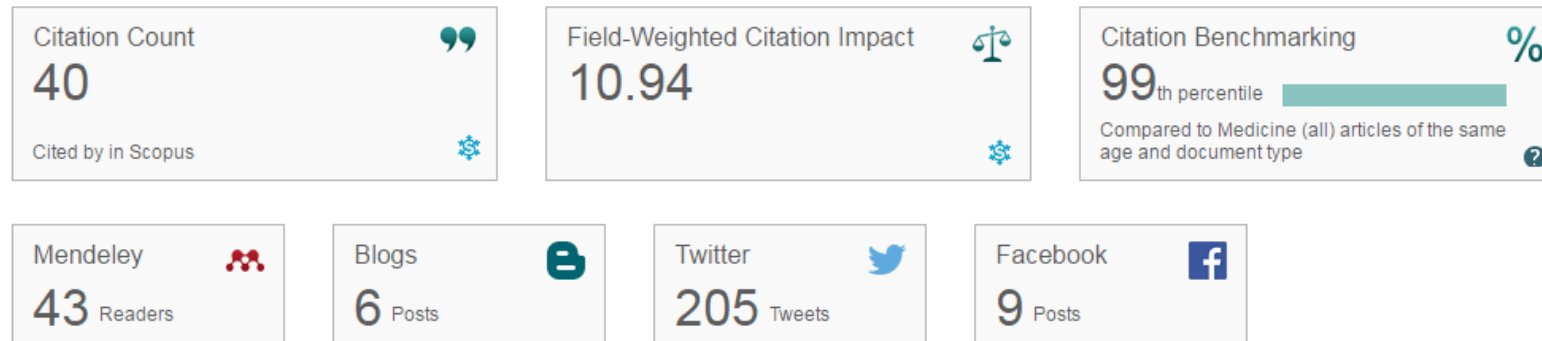
Scholarly Activity  
Mendeley, CiteULike, etc.

Scholarly Commentary  
Blogs, Reviews, Wikipedia, etc.

Mass Media

Social Activity  
Twitter, Facebook, etc.

### Overview



Promote and track your impact with an online CV



# Research Gate



[Research Gate](#) is social networking for scientists

RG Scores are not 'official' and there are some dodgy algorithms but it is on trend and fun

Turn the automatic invitation settings OFF!

A screenshot of a Research Gate profile for Heidi Hawkins. The profile includes a navigation bar with 'HOME', 'QUESTIONS', and 'JOBS', a search bar, and a profile picture. The main content area shows a 'Current Project' titled 'Impact of holistic planned grazing on soil, plants and animals' with 1 update, 5 collaborators, and 1 follower. Below this is a statistics row showing 26 publications, 1,484 reads, 315 citations, 43,244 impact points, and 20 followers. The right sidebar contains an 'About' section with a bio and a 'Skills and expertise' section listing 'Phycosphere', 'Plant Physiology', and 'Soil Ecology'.

HOME QUESTIONS JOBS

Search

Heidi Hawkins | PhD | 420 688  
PhD  
HHG is Director of Research at Conservation SA  
University of Cape Town, Cape Town | Department of Biol...

Add a new Article

Overview Contributions Timeline Info Stats Scores

Current Project

Impact of holistic planned grazing on soil, plants and animals  
1 Update · 5 Collaborators · 1 Follower

View project

26 Publications · 1,484 Reads · 315 Citations · 43,244 Impact Points · 20 Followers · View stats

University of Cape Town  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Cape Town, South Africa

About  
My expertise is in soil-plant-microbe interactions (mycorrhizae) and root adaptations (e.g. cluster roots) in the context of both natural and agricultural landscapes. About 20% of my research outputs in the last eight years are physiological or ecophysiological, ca. 20% is applied ecophysiology relevant to agriculture, soil, indigenous crops, and another 20% comprises translational products such as technical reports and manuals on ecological farming approaches.

Skills and expertise (3)  
Phycosphere Plant Physiology Soil Ecology

“...key is careful organization and clear thinking. Another is a willingness to edit and re-edit your writing. A third is experience - practice might not make perfect, but it certainly helps. The reward for all these efforts is the communication of your ideas with clarity, precision, and grace.”

—Mark V. Wilson 2004 *Writing in Ecology*

# 8. Online resources

- Elsevier online training <https://www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com>
- The Purdue Online Writing Lab <https://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- Scitable's English communication for scientists <http://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/english-communication-for-scientists-14053993/writing-scientific-papers-14239285>
- How to write a paper in scientific journal style and format <http://abacus.bates.edu/~ganderso/biology/resources/writing/HTWtoc.html>
- Editage Insights: Submission and peer review <http://www.editage.com/insights/how-to-respond-to-comments-by-peer-reviewers>
- Editage Insights: How to deal with conflicting reviewer comments <http://www.editage.com/insights/how-to-deal-with-conflicting-reviewer-comments>
- Editage Insights: How to write a great rebuttal letter <http://www.editage.com/insights/how-to-write-a-great-rebuttal-letter>
- ECR2STAR: 7 Tips for dealing with reviewer comments <http://www.ecr2star.org/blog/2013/10/15/7-secrets-for-dealing-with-reviewer-comments>