

Guidelines for Guest Editors of Special Issues

General

Freshwater Biology offers its pages to 2-3 special issues per year and welcomes proposals by prospective guest editors. Proposals should meet the following criteria:

- The proposed theme is of topical interest to a broad audience of freshwater ecologists
- The individual papers each make a coherent contribution to the overall theme
- The scientific quality of the papers can be expected to meet the general standard of the journal
- Similar series of papers cannot be found elsewhere
- A high technical quality of the papers can be ensured by the authors and guest editors

Special issues may consist of original data papers, theoretical or conceptual papers, reviews or syntheses or a mix thereof. Individual manuscripts will be peer-reviewed in the same way as any other paper submitted to the journal. The same stringent criteria for acceptance apply. Consequently, *no guarantee can be given that individual submissions to a special issue will be accepted, even if they have been invited*. It is typical for a significant number of papers to be rejected or require substantial revision. It is essential that the guest editors recognize this editorial policy and communicate it clearly to the authors before manuscripts are submitted.

Format and size

Special issues typically include 10-15 papers preceded by a short Introduction (smaller groups of 6-9 papers may appear as a special section in a regular issue of the journal). The Introduction provides general background to the topic, presents the objectives of the special issue and introduces the individual papers. It is written by the guest editors and normally does not exceed six printed journal pages, including references and a summary. Optionally, the papers may be followed by a concluding synthesis paper, which is especially appropriate if the special issue consists of papers reporting original research. The synthesis may be written by the guest editors or other authors solicited by the guest editors. Alternatively, the synthesis may be combined with the Introduction in a single paper that opens the special issue.

An average issue has 200 printed journal pages, which is equivalent to about 500-600 double-spaced manuscript pages in 12 point Times font (including references, tables, figure legends and figures). There are no formal limits to the length of papers, but page space in the journal is tight, and most papers should be no longer than 9,000 words in total.

Steps in the Preparation of a Special Issue

1. Submitting a proposal

The prospective guest editors must submit a short proposal for a special issue or section to the journal's [special issues editor](#). The proposal should include a brief (~ 2 pages) explanation of the topic and its importance to freshwater ecology, plus a list of tentative titles, abstracts and full names and affiliations of authors of all papers. There should normally be no more than three guest editors, among whom a corresponding editor should be designated.

Based on this material, the [special issues](#) editor, in consultation with the regular [Journal Editors](#), will seek advice from external experts and make a decision about the general acceptance of the proposal. Given current submission rates, proposals may have to be declined because of inadequate journal space, even if the topic is of great interest and the expected quality of the papers is high.

2. Initiating the Special Issue

If the proposal to prepare a special issue is accepted, the guest editors should begin by preparing an Excel spreadsheet that includes the title and authors of each paper, along with the names and email addresses of at least four suitable referees for each paper. This spreadsheet should be sent to the special issues editor and *Freshwater Biology*'s editorial assistant. Once this is received, the editorial assistant will provide Editor status to the guest editors on Scholar One (the electronic manuscript handling system), and papers can begin to be submitted.

Each manuscript must be reviewed by at least two qualified, independent, anonymous peer-reviewers. Appropriate reviewers will be identified by the guest editors and suggested to the [special issues editor](#) for approval. It is important to identify reviewers who do not have a conflict of interest, which is sometimes difficult for papers submitted to a special issue. Guest editors should identify at least four potential reviewers for each manuscript at the start, and should be prepared to suggest additional reviewers if their initial selections decline to provide reviews (in recent practice, it often has been necessary to suggest six or more referees). If special issues arise from symposia or small meetings, at least one of the reviewers should not have been involved. It may be useful to choose one reviewer who can assess the technical details of the paper and another who can assess its broader importance. Papers contributed by the guest editors of the special issue will be dealt with by the [special issues editor](#).

The correspondence from the guest editors to reviewers should ideally include a brief summary of the special issue, to make the proposed context of each paper evident to reviewers. Although context and overall coherence are important criteria for evaluating manuscripts submitted as part of a special issue, reviewers should be explicitly asked to apply the same rigorous criteria for the assessment of manuscripts as for any ordinary paper submitted to the journal. Scientific quality is the single most important assessment criterion. In addition, reviewers' opinions on the importance of the reviewed paper for the entire special issue are appreciated.

3. The peer-review process

Submission of papers by authors should be electronic, via [Freshwater Biology Scholar One](#) as detailed in the [Freshwater Biology Author Guidelines](#). Once reviews have been received, the guest editors provide a short evaluation of the manuscript based on the reviews and their own assessment of the paper. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the papers should be pinpointed with a detailed recommendation on how to proceed. Guest editors should submit their recommendation to the special issues editor as soon as possible after receiving the reviews. The special issues editor will then pass the reviews and guest editors' evaluations along to the authors.

Papers may be substantially delayed if suitable referees cannot be found or if referees' reports aren't submitted on time. Guest editors should be prepared to suggest additional referees or remind referees to provide timely reports to minimize these delays.

4. Decisions on manuscripts

Based on the reviews and the guest editors' own assessments, the special issues editor and the guest editors work together to reach a conclusion about the suitability of each manuscript. The initial recommendation about a manuscript is made by the guest editors and sent to the special issues editor, who then communicates to the authors. Possible outcomes are:

- Accepted; if the guest editors chose this option, the paper should be fully ready for publication, and fully conform to *Freshwater Biology* style requirements
- Accepted pending minor revision; these papers are likely to be ultimately accepted and do not require further peer review, but need attention from the author
- Accepted pending major revision; these papers may ultimately be accepted but require additional review by at least one external referee; alternatively, these papers may be rejected following further review
- Reject and resubmit; these papers will be reconsidered after revision and re-evaluation by the same or different reviewers; papers should only rarely be assigned to this category; these resubmitted papers will be treated as new submissions and undergo full peer review
- Rejected; these papers will not be further considered by *Freshwater Biology*

If the paper is to be revised, comments to the authors (which will be forwarded by the Special Issues Editor to the authors) should indicate in detail how to revise the manuscript. The more specific the instructions, the fewer rounds of revision will be needed. Several rounds of review and revision are possible. The final decision on the acceptance of individual manuscripts and the special issue as a whole rests with the special issues editor and the regular [Journal Editors](#). Occasionally, the special issues editor may disagree with the guest editors' recommendation to accept a paper and require further revisions or even rejection.

It is neither kind nor efficient to return a paper to the authors for repeated revision if the paper is so fundamentally flawed that it is unlikely to become acceptable. Better to make the hard decision to reject early in the review process than later, after authors, referees and editors have expended considerable and needless efforts.

5. The editing process

Guest editors are responsible for editing the manuscript to journal style (see notes below and recent issues of the journal). They ensure sound science and accurate, clear and succinct English; harmonization among all component manuscripts (e.g. species names and technical terms); and a clear organization and logical flow of data, ideas and arguments within each manuscript. The last point pertains particularly to Introductions and Discussions. As a rule, papers should be structured and written such that the general relevance of the study is clear, rather than focussing on aspects of local importance. The objectives should be explicitly stated in the last paragraph of the Introduction of each paper. Guest editors are encouraged to identify meaningful cross-references of the papers in a special issue and discuss them with authors.

Ample attention should be given to the technical quality of the papers, particularly the figures (e.g. general clarity; consistency in style; indication of error bars wherever appropriate; font sizes large enough to withstand reduction of the figures to (normally) one column width (80 mm); use of *Freshwater Biology* conventions on units, such as the capital L for litre and the

notation mg L⁻¹ instead of mg/L; format of references). British spelling should be used throughout. See also notes below and refer to the [Instructions for Authors](#) of ordinary papers and to a [recent issue](#) of the journal for additional information. Guest editors should allow for ample time for thorough editing.

Once guest editors believe that a paper is acceptable, they should send the completely edited manuscript (as an attachment) along with their recommendation for acceptance to the special issues editor via the [Freshwater Biology Scholar One website](#). The special issues editor will automatically be notified. He may edit a manuscript further or request further editing by the guest editors. Moreover, because in many cases this will be the first time that the special issues editor considers the manuscript in detail, rejection or requests for substantial revision are possible at this stage. The guest editors should make the authors aware of this possibility from the start. Papers may be rejected at this stage because of insufficient technical quality. If the special issues editor believes that a manuscript should be rejected or substantially revised, he will consult with the guest editors before writing to the authors.

6. Final steps

Complete manuscripts will be forwarded to the production editor at Wiley-Blackwell by the special issues editor. Electronic versions of the figures should be provided in both EPS format and their original format. Authors and guest editors should consult the section [Electronic Submission of Artwork](#) for further details, which includes hints for [file conversion](#). Figures should not be incorporated in the word-processing file in the final version of manuscripts.

All manuscripts need to be accompanied by an *Exclusive Licence Form* ([ELF](#)) that has been filled in and signed by the corresponding authors. If authors or guest editors cannot provide signed ELFs as PDF files, the forms should be sent or faxed to the [Production Editor](#) at Blackwell Publishing.

A paper may appear on-line soon after it has been accepted, and well ahead of its appearance in print, if it does not contain cross-references to other papers in the special issue that have not yet been accepted.

In addition to uploading the edited manuscripts and ELFs on the website, guest editors are asked to email the special issues editor a table of contents (giving the order in which the papers should appear) and suggestions for possible illustrations to be printed on the front cover of the issue. This could be an appealing photograph, a drawing or figure, or a composite illustration, all related to the theme of the issue or a particular paper therein. All cover illustrations need to be accompanied by a legend.

Finally, guest editors are asked to provide an abstract of the entire special issue for publication on the *Freshwater Biology* web site for [special issues](#). Examples of abstracts can be found at this site. Abstracts should be electronically sent to the special issues editor.

7. Notes on journal style for editors and authors

The notes for editing manuscripts to journal style listed below highlight a few points that commonly have to be changed during the editing process. Authors and guest editors should make a point in reading them carefully. The [Instructions for Authors](#) on this website and the Notice to Contributors at the back of each issue of the journal are more comprehensive and are worth looking at.

Summary The Summary is a series of short, numbered paragraphs at the beginning of the paper. The Summary should be very brief – normally ~3% of the length of the paper and never more than 500 words.

References These are given as follows:
(Darwin, 1862; Ramsbottom, 1989). Two-author papers are always quoted in full, three-author papers are quoted in full at the first mention but abbreviated to *et al.* thereafter. Papers with four or more authors are always abbreviated. Note that journal titles are spelled in full in the References. Avoid reference to reports, theses and other grey literature. References of books and book chapters should be complete, including the location of the publisher.

Cross-references to other papers in the special issue should give volume and page numbers as “xx, xxx-xxx” to alert the copy editor that final volume and page numbers will need to be added later. (Thus: Scriddley RE (2012) Nitrogen cycling in a meromictic lake. *Freshwater Biology* xx, xxx-xxx)

Authorities for species Naming authorities for all species (i.e. where both the generic and specific names are given) should be given, on first mention only, in the main text or in Tables. Authorities should not be given in the title or in the Summary.

Reference to figures Figure is spelt out at the beginning of sentences (e.g. Figure 3 shows the relationship...) but abbreviated to Fig. elsewhere. Lower case letters are used for parts of figures (e.g. Fig. 3a & b).

Spelling and general usage The journal generally uses English spelling and style. Thus we would spell, for instance:

behaviour	<i>not</i>	behavior
colour	<i>not</i>	color
sulphate	<i>not</i>	sulfate
Acknowledgments	<i>not</i>	Acknowledgements
fibre	<i>not</i>	fiber
centre	<i>not</i>	center
	but	
colonize	<i>not</i>	colonise

Words and phrases that often have to be changed on manuscripts are:

- 'Spate' rather than 'flood' for a period of high stream discharge, unless there is flooding over the banks.
- Until, *not* through (e.g. samples were taken monthly from July 1993 *until* August 1994).
- Catchment or drainage basin rather than watershed, unless watershed is referring to its meaning as the boundary between two catchments.

- Autumn *not* fall.
- Temperatures may be high or low but *not* warm, cool, hot or cold.
- Substratum(a) rather than substrate(s) to mean a surface or bed, to avoid confusion with biochemical substrates.
- Altitude rather than elevation.
- The symbol # to mean number should be avoided (e.g. a '# 12 mesh' should be written 'a number 12 mesh').
- The style mg L⁻¹ rather than mg/L should be used (note the capital L, in contrast to the normal usage of SI units).
- Numbers less than 10 should be spelt out (e.g. one thermometer, 11 samples but 1.0 g)

If you need any further guidance, please ask the [special issues editor](#). We look forward to a fruitful collaboration!

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