

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 reasonably broad audience of freshwater ecologists
- The individual papers will 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 not unusual for a significant number of papers to be rejected or required to be substantially revised. 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 comprise 10-15 papers preceded by a short Introduction. The Introduction provides some 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 paper or synthesis, 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.

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). Shorter series of papers are welcome. If they do not fill an entire issue, they may be published as a Special Section in a normal issue.

Steps in the Preparation of a Special Issue

1. Submitting a proposal

The prospective guest editors submit a short proposal for a special issue or section to the journal's Associate Editor in charge of special issues, hereafter called [special issues editor](#). The proposal includes a brief explanation of the topic, its importance to freshwater ecology, and a list of tentative titles, abstracts and full names and affiliations of authors. 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 make a decision about the general acceptance of the proposal. External experts will normally be solicited to comment on the proposal's suitability for publication in *Freshwater Biology* before this decision is made. Given current rates of submissions, proposals may have to be declined for space reasons, even if the topic is of great interest and the expected quality of the papers is high.

2. The peer- review process

Each manuscript must be reviewed by at least two qualified, 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. It is advisable to identify at least three or four potential reviewers for each manuscript at the start. If special issues emanate from symposia or small meetings, at least one of the reviewers should not have been involved. Papers contributed by the guest editors of the special issue will be dealt with by the [special issues editor](#).

Submission of papers by authors should be electronic, via [Freshwater Biology Manuscript Central](#) as detailed in the [Freshwater Biology Author Guidelines](#). The guest editors propose reviewers for each paper, discuss them with the special issues editor and after agreement solicit the reviews. When the reviews have been received, the guest editors provide a short evaluation of the manuscript based on the reviews and their own assessment. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the papers should be pinpointed with a recommendation on how to proceed. It is recommended to advance with an individual paper as soon as a manuscript, the reviews, etc. have been received by the guest editors.

The correspondence from the guest editors to reviewers should ideally include a list of all the papers proposed for the special issue and a tentative copy of the introductory paper. The purpose is 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. 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 tentative decision at this stage is normally communicated to the authors by the guest editors. Possible outcomes are:

- Accepted pending minor or major revision; these papers are likely to be ultimately accepted
- Not accepted, but will be reconsidered after revision and re-evaluation by the same or different reviewers; papers should only exceptionally be assigned to this category
- Rejected

In the first two cases, the letter 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](#).

4. 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 becomes clear, rather than focussing on particular case studies or 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.

Guest editors are asked to upload the completely edited manuscripts on the [Freshwater Biology Manuscript Central 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 manuscripts in detail, rejection or requests for substantial revision of manuscripts are possible at this stage. The guest editors are asked to make the authors aware of this possibility from the start. Papers may be rejected at this stage because of insufficient technical quality. If a manuscript is rejected or additional revisions are needed, the authors will be contacted via the guest editor, unless a direct contact between authors and special issues editor appears to be preferable. The special issues editor and the guest editors mutually inform each other about any communication with the authors at this stage.

5. Final submission of manuscripts

Complete manuscripts will be forwarded to the publisher, Blackwell Publishing, 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 ELF files as PDF files, the forms should be sent or faxed to the [Production Editor](#) at Blackwell Publishing.

In addition to uploading the edited manuscripts and ELF files on the website, guest editors are asked to email the special issues editor a table of contents 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.

6. 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 This has to be presented as a series of short, numbered paragraphs at the beginning of the paper.

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. Reference to reports, theses and other grey literature should be avoided. References of books and book chapters should be complete, including the location of the publisher.

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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