

ICES JOURNAL OF MARINE SCIENCE

GUIDE FOR REVIEWERS

The ICES Journal of Marine Science publishes innovative and quality material that contributes to the scientific understanding of marine systems and the impact of human activities on them. Management and conservation issues related to the marine environment, including oceanography, marine habitats, living resources and related topics that bridge gaps across disciplines, as well as related economic, social and public administration considerations, are considered suitable material. All works to be published need to demonstrate originality, the significance of their underlying message, be of high quality, and clearly integrate their contribution with existing knowledge.

Quality peer reviews are essential for ensuring a high standard of material in scholarly journals, and your evaluation will therefore play a major role in our decision as to whether to accept a manuscript for publication. Therefore, when evaluating a manuscript, you need to satisfy yourself, *inter alia*, that:

- 1) the subject material falls within the breadth and aims of the *Journal* as defined above (this will have been evaluated already by the editor, but reviewer confirmation is still useful);
- 2) the title and abstract clearly reflect the contents of the paper;
- 3) the paper makes an original contribution to knowledge; e.g. by way of new data, techniques or ideas;
- 4) it is properly placed in the context of existing knowledge, giving due recognition to published work;
- 5) the evidence and arguments are presented clearly and concisely, or whether the paper is unduly long for the message being conveyed (if the latter, how might it be shortened without loss, and in any case would it be appropriate to modify the manuscript to a short communication);
- 6) the methodology (including sampling, experimental design, and theory) is scientifically and technically sound;
- 7) the text, tables, and figures are mutually consistent, sufficient (but not excessive), and clear;
- 8) the conclusions are appropriate given the evidence presented;
- 9) there are specialized parts (e.g. mathematics/statistics) on which someone else needs to comment (if so, who is suggested);
- 10) the manuscript overall is appropriate for publication in the *ICES Journal of Marine Science*
 - 10.1) as it stands or with minor revision;
 - 10.2) only if modified substantially along the lines proposed;
 - 10.3) as a short communication;
 - 10.4) not at all.

A good review is a creative document that advances science, so in addition to identifying shortcomings, it needs to provide guidance to the author for improving the work and its presentation. Comments in such reviews are best made in a helpful manner, even if the paper is not deemed suitable for publication; harshly-worded

comments reduce the effectiveness of a review and diminish the stature of the journal. Given the above, constructive commentary is encouraged, but publication style and format should not influence the decision other than as a generic comment, e.g. the grammar of the text needs attention. It is also helpful to both author and editors if the strong points of the paper as well as its weak ones are highlighted. Note that a positive evaluation without a clear and substantive explanation of the rationale for that support may not aid editors in making a final evaluation of the worthiness of the work for publication.

Some reviewers prefer to return manuscripts in electronic form, with recommendations and comments made in “Track Changes” mode. However, please note that such files contain personal information such as your name and organization. To remove this: (i) on the Tools menu, click Options, then click the Security tab; (ii) select the Remove personal information from file properties on save check box, and (iii) Save the document.

Facility is given for the review to be made up of several parts, general comments and detailed comments (both made available to the author), and recommendations and comments to the editor alone. Please make use of this facility when submitting your review.

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We appreciate your willingness to support provide your expertise in support of the *ICES Journal of Marine Science*.