

How to get published in the *ICES Journal of Marine Science*

[ICES Journal of Marine Science](#) (henceforth, the *Journal*) is the flagship publication of the [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea](#). The Journal seeks to (i) efficiently and promptly publish rigorous, accessible, and entertaining material that will help marine scientists in their daily work, lifelong learning, and career development, (ii) be at the forefront of the international debate on all aspects of marine science, (iii) be among the world's most influential and widely read fisheries and marine science journals.

The *Journal* strives to serve the fisheries and marine science community by publishing the highest quality research articles that contribute significantly to our understanding of marine ecosystems and the impact of human activities on them. We welcome work from anywhere in the world and encourage submissions from early career scientists as well as from leading researchers in the field.

By paying careful attention to the advice below, authors can help the *Journal* to achieve these aims and increase their chances of manuscript acceptance.

Points to consider when deciding whether to submit your manuscript

Approximately 50% of submissions are declined after editorial pre-screening. The overall acceptance rate for original articles is approximately 30%.

The most common reason for immediate rejection is that the material reported upon in the manuscript does not fall within the scope of the *Journal*. Therefore, read the *Journal's* [scope and mission statements](#) carefully and make sure that your research is a good match. Look through [recent issues](#) of the *Journal* to ensure that you find articles that are related to the type of research that you report in your manuscript. Be sure that there is a member of the *Journal's* [editorial board](#) who has the expertise to handle the manuscript.

The following broadly characterized manuscript types are **unlikely** to be pursued through peer review:

- Principally descriptive studies that are absent of a clear objective or hypothesis, or which are narrow in scientific scope or relevance.
- Studies that are based upon limited data sets, for example, low level of replication; small sample size; limited number of sample dates/locations; short time series etc.
- Species-specific or regional studies that may be of local importance but are not set in a wider context nor integrated with analogous work conducted elsewhere.
- Case studies that are confirmatory of a large body of earlier work and that do not clearly add something novel that extends our understanding of the question.
- The *Journal* will typically decline to publish articles that are repurposed from internal, institutional, or governmental reports unless they have been recast as strong stand-alone research articles and their content is clearly and substantively different from the previously published documents.

If you are unsure about any of the above, contact the Editor-in-Chief or a member of the editorial board with a pre-submission inquiry.

Points to consider when preparing your manuscript

Authors should provide a **cover letter** with their submission that summarizes the significance and importance of the research. The cover letter forms an important part of the initial evaluation of a manuscript.

Consider carefully which is the most appropriate [article type](#) for your manuscript and follow the format instructions on the *Journal's* website carefully when you prepare it.

An accurate and informative title, abstract, and key words are important. For online bibliographic searching these have a key role in drawing the attention of potential readers to your paper.

Excessive length and/or inappropriately high number of Figures and Tables will result in the manuscript being returned without review. The *Journal* provides the opportunity to include [Supplementary Material](#) online and also actively encourages [data archiving](#).

Clearly and concisely stating the aim of the work at the beginning of a manuscript, and then coming back in a conclusion or summary to state the outcomes and significance, helps both the reviewers, and ultimately the readers, of your work.

Unclear writing and poor structure impede the review process, sometimes resulting in a negative recommendation. To avoid reviewers dwelling on stylistic details at the expense of scientific content, authors are advised to submit only polished manuscripts. The *Journal* recognises the challenges of non-English speaking authors; manuscripts will only be rejected on the basis of language if initial review is not possible due to an inability to understand the content. However, a standard of English appropriate for an international journal will make the work of the reviewers easier and will increase the chance of a more favourable reception.

Common reasons for rejection of manuscripts following peer review

Approximately 40% of the manuscripts submitted for peer review are ultimately rejected. The most common reasons are: flawed study design; inappropriate methodology or statistical analysis; a lack of detail/clarity in the methods that prevent reviewers from understanding how the research was done (e.g. sample size; level of replication; statistical analyses...); lack of novelty/only confirmatory of previously published work; interpretations that are not strongly supported by the data and/or that greatly overstep the constraints of the work.

In an era of ever-increasing numbers of scientific journals, particularly those publishing online, it is inevitable that the *Journal* receives manuscripts that may have been previously rejected by other journals. Although it is not a condition of submission, an open acknowledgement of prior rejection by another journal, together with the reasons, can assist the *Journal's* review process. Manuscripts that are sent to a reviewer who has previously seen it for another journal - particularly if his/her advice has not been taken into account in preparing a revised version - very often attract negative review comments. Authors should consider this carefully when submitting a manuscript that has been rejected elsewhere.