

Editorial

Are all journals legitimate?



Running a successful, reliable and trustworthy marine animal ecology journal these days seems to be a greater challenge than one could ever have anticipated. Why - it seems relatively straight forward; set it up, advertise and then wait for the prize-winning submissions to overflow your desk as editor! Then once you are established, secure an impact factor, get listed in all the prestigious listings SCOPUS etc. and your journal is in the 'big leagues'. Whoa not so fast. It may have been straight forward years ago but not so anymore.

There appear to be more hurdles to jump over and obstacles to overcome to achieve those goals. Are these critical milestones to achieve or perhaps doing a good job is enough? How, as a journal trying to make a name for itself in the field, can one demonstrate excellence. JMATE has always tried to apply a reasonable standard to its publications and we have demonstrated this consistently. This is evidenced by the numerous inquiries we have received from well-respected publishing companies offering to 'handle' our journal. Would that not be a positive thing one would wonder, until discussions reveal many restricting conditions as well as charges to be levied to both authors, readers and the journal itself for services rendered.

Our mandate has always been to provide a cost free venue for the publication and dissemination of findings and observations that help our overall understanding of our marine environment and the species within. This ranges from pure science to observational, which could include even practical tips, tools to facilitate research or even experiences and case reports. All our manuscripts undergo rigorous review by respected scientists, researchers and others known in their respective fields. Nothing is charged to authors for this, nor are there publication costs as all our editorial staff are volunteers. JMATE has

purposefully remained an e-journal publication to keep costs to minimum, while disseminating as widely as possible.

We have an open access (no charge levied) concept, hosted by our supporting Canadian registered charity, the Oceanographic Environmental Research Society, as a sub-branch on their main website. JMATE is registered with an ISSN number and all our staff conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism. We are indeed fortunate that when external reviewers, known in their respective fields, are contacted, there is an over 75% response rate. Most of the time it is positive and done in a very timely fashion. When not, it is often a busy time for the individual, who usually offers to do others at a later date, should we find it helpful. Also, JMATE does have a pool of loyal authors, who over the last 10 years, continue to submit their work for publication!

Apparently, that is not the case for many other journals, who send blitz emails soliciting submission for their journals, promising publication and charging significant amounts of money to do so. These are especially prevalent in the medical sciences, but are beginning to show themselves in the marine ecology field of late. Many of these have been identified as bogus, so no wonder journals not affiliated with major publishers, such as JMATE, could be lumped in with these other less scrupulous ones. Also, no wonder the organizations such as SCOPUS are increasing the terms for their listing of journals and the rigor to obtain impact factors has further increased! Meeting these ever increasing requirements can prove difficult for a young journal. This, in turn, can be construed as lacking legitimacy, despite the contrary being true. We depend on authors submitting well written, useful and properly thought out papers to fill our issues in a timely manner. With the ongoing behaviors by unscrupulous journals, we the small independent journal, have an ongoing battle to avoid being painted by the same brush – such a shame, but regrettably the new norm. It has been a source of frustration as we continuously strive to maintain a high standard and encourage quality submissions.



Editorial Cont'd

Understandably authors do opt for high impact journals. However, not all work will be received positively by those high impact factor journals, resulting in key findings never seeing the public eye. This then holds back the dissemination of potentially useful information, unless another option such as JMATE is taken advantage of, without fear by authors that it is just another bogus journal.

Ultimately JMATE is here to stay and will not be deterred, continuing to provide high standard, peer reviewed legitimate publication options to our readers and authors. We encourage authors to consider us as an alternative venue for their thoughts, work and will be pleased to work with you to share your message with others in the field.

Dr Carin Wittnich
Editor-in-Chief, JMATE



Tip 10 - Choice of journal: define a list of target journals!