



Evolution Journal Survey Executive Summary

This survey was distributed via email to members of the Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE) and the European Society of Evolutionary Biologists (ESEB) in May 2021, conducted via Qualtrics, and had 487 respondents.

Respondent Information

- **Membership:** 80% of respondents were SSE members
- **Research Areas:** The large majority (96%) study evolution
 - Other main areas of specialization included ecology (41%), genetics (34%), and genomics (35%)
 - Field-based work was most common (45%), followed by lab-based (39%), and computational-based (26%)
- **Location:** Most respondents were based in the USA (52%) or Europe (29%), with less than 10% each in Central & South America, Australia & New Zealand, Canada, or other countries
- **Career Stage:** Roughly one third (36%) of respondents were Professors, with other career stages fairly equally represented: Associate Professor (15%), Assistant Professor (14%), Postdoc (14%), and Graduate Students (11%)
- **History of publishing in the journal *Evolution*:** Most respondents (75%) had previously submitted to *Evolution*
 - One third (34%) of these had submitted within the last year
 - Nearly half (45%) submitted within the last five years

Author Experience

- **Top reasons to submit to *Evolution*,** based on number of respondents who ranked each reason in their top six:
 - Journal reputation (431 respondents)
 - Impact factor (330)
 - Society-owned (297)
 - Cost to publish (272)
 - Previous experience with the journal (261)
 - Reviewing quality (251)



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- **Top journals to submit your evolutionary biology work to**, based on number of respondents who ranked each journal in their top six:
 - *Evolution* (419 respondents)
 - *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* (319)
 - *American Naturalist* (262)
 - *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* (227)
 - *Evolution Letters* (209)
 - *Nature Ecology and Evolution* (202)
- **Reviewing modes:** Most respondents favored double blind (39% of respondents) or single blind (28%) review, with author-option (19%) and fully open (12%) less favored.
 - Double blind review was preferred by the largest proportion of Professors (44%), Associate Professors (47%), Postdocs (44%), and Graduate Students (56%)
 - Single blind review was most favored among Assistant Professors (45%)
- **Publishing Reviews:** 178 respondents thought reviews should not be published, 127 favored publishing reviews with blinded reviewer identity, and 125 were not sure.
 - Not publishing reviews was most favored by Assistant Professors, with more than half (53%) providing this response
 - Publishing with reviewer identity blinded was most favored by Postdoctoral Researchers, with 45% favoring this method

Journal Publication

- **Publication Mode:** Respondents had a slight preference for monthly publication (200 respondents) over continuous publication (172), with 109 unsure
 - Monthly publication was most supported by Assistant Professors, with 51% supporting this option
- **Open Access:** When asked if they would be more or less likely to submit to *Evolution* if it was Open Access, more than half (59%) said it would depend on cost.
 - This was the most common response across career stages, with 60% of Assistant and Associate Professors and 70% of Postdoctoral Researchers providing this answer

The Future of *Evolution*

- **Challenges:** The top challenges faced by society journals such as *Evolution*, based on the number of times each challenge was mentioned in open-ended comments:
 - Competition with other journals (88 mentions)
 - Costs (77)



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- Open access and access to journal content (65)
 - Maintaining/increasing submissions, relevance, and quality (52)
 - Maintaining viable and acceptable business model (36)
 - Maintaining brand and reputation as a society journal (30)
- **Strengths:** The top strengths of *Evolution*, based on the number of times each strength was mentioned in open-ended comments:
 - Reputation (138 mentions)
 - Quality of papers (103)
 - Society-owned (75)
 - Rigorous review (67)
 - Breadth and accessibility (65)
 - History (44)
 - Editorial board (30)
- **Ways to Improve:** The top ways *Evolution* can improve, based on the number of times each improvement was mentioned in open-ended comments:
 - New or modern topics (27 mentions)
 - Faster decision times (22)
 - Go open access (affordably) (22)
 - Maintain quality and consistency of reviews and decisions (17)
 - New sections (16)
 - Maintain broad scope, recapture lost areas (15)