

Journal Publication Ethics in The Festivus

Aims and Scope

The Festivus publishes original articles on all aspects of the Phylum Mollusca that are of high quality and broad interest. Manuscripts describing new taxa, unpublished research, review articles, faunal surveys, and smaller papers of local geographical coverage will be considered for publication. Articles of a lengthy nature (exceeding 25 pages) or containing large amounts of raw data may not be appropriate in scope for The Festivus, although such articles may be of interest as a Supplement to The Festivus. Whether or not a manuscript is appropriate for a Supplement is at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Brief articles of general interest to either professional or amateur malacologists and shell collectors, not exceeding 3,000 words, may be published in the non-peer reviewed section of the journal. Color pictures and plates are encouraged for all manuscripts.

Research Integrity

Misconduct. The Festivus has a strong policy against research misconduct and will reject an article for publication if it is reasonably believed by the Editorial Board that research misconduct has occurred.

Research misconduct is defined in the U.S. Federal Policy which advises against “research misconduct”, as follows: “Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.” (42 CFR Part 93)

Falsification and Image Manipulation. Modification of images may be legitimate and even necessary, however changes to images can be misleading and inappropriate image manipulation is a form of fabrication or falsification. Excessive manipulations of digital images are inappropriate as they are misleading to the public. Including misleading images in a manuscript is a form of misconduct.

Plagiarism. The Festivus has a strong policy against plagiarism and will reject an article for publication if it is reasonably believed by the Editorial Board that plagiarism has occurred. U.S. Federal Policy which advises against plagiarism defines “plagiarism”, as follows: “Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.” (10 CFR § 733.3) The U.S. Office of Research Integrity uses the following working definition of “plagiarism” in its policy on plagiarism: “ORI considers plagiarism to include both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another’s work. It does not include authorship or credit disputes.”

Copyright and Intellectual Property. The Festivus has a strong policy against copyright violations and will reject an article for publication if it is reasonably believed by the Editorial Board that copyright violations have occurred. U.S. Federal law at 17 U.S. Code §102 protects under copyright law

all “original works of authorship”, including literary, dramatic, musical, architectural, cartographic, choreographic, pantomimic, pictorial, graphic, sculptural, and audiovisual creations.” The requirements for protection is that the matter be: (1) Original work of authorship, and (2) fixed in a tangible medium of expression. In publishing the journal while “plagiarism” is technically one form of copyright violation, more commonly the problem can arise with the use of images, maps, charts, or graphs created by someone other than the author of the manuscript without a legal right to do so, or without obtaining permissive use in advance, and without crediting the original author(s) of the images.

In sound scientific practice authors of manuscripts commonly use images from prior works which are either governmental works (to which copyright does not apply), in the public domain (such as, for example, under a Creative Commons attribution license), covered by the “Fair Use Doctrine” (codified at 17 U.S. Code §107), and other works with advance permission, and always with the manuscript author giving credit to the original author(s) of the images.

Editorial Standards and Policies

Authorship. A manuscript submitted for publication in *The Festivus* should be attributed to one or more authors. The corresponding author should confirm to the Editorial Board that they are submitting an original work, that they have the written permission of their coauthors to include their names on the manuscripts, that they and their coauthors all meet the journal’s requirements for authorship, and that the authors all agree to the order in which their names appear on the manuscript, and that they have read and complied with the journal’s Guidelines for Authors. The requirements for authorship (per the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors are as follows:

1. Substantial contributions to the manuscript, such as contributions to the conception or design of the work, acquisition of data, or analysis or interpretation of data;
2. Drafting of the work or critically reviewing and revising it for intellectual content;
3. Final approval of the version of the manuscript to be published;
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work relating to the accuracy or integrity of the work.

Individuals whose contributions to the manuscript are not of sufficient magnitude to qualify for authorship should be identified by name in the Acknowledgments section of the manuscript.

Editors and Journal Staff as Authors. Members of the Editorial Board or journal staff members should not be involved in editorial decisions about the review of their own scholarly work. Furthermore, a member of the Editorial Board cannot be a peer reviewer for any scholarly article submitted for publication in *The Festivus* to which they are an author.

Conflicts of Interest. Members of the Editorial Board or journal staff members should avoid all conflicts of interest, as well as the appearance of a conflict of interest. When members of the Editorial Board and other editorial staff are presented with manuscripts where their own interests may be perceived to impair their ability to make an unbiased editorial decision, they should withdraw from discussions, deputize other members of the Board to make decisions, or suggest that the author(s) of the manuscript in question seek publication in a different journal. The Editor-in-Chief and the Research Editor should manage peer reviewers conflicts of interest with both authors and the journal.

Peer Review. All scholarly articles published in the first section of the journal (which are formatted with two columns and have double justified margins) are peer reviewed. The Festivus utilizes a “single blind” peer review process where the authors do not know the names of their peer reviewer(s). Further, the Editorial Board does not allow authors to chose their peer reviewers as that may be deemed to suggest a lack of independence or a conflict of interest in the review process.

All scholarly articles are subject to the peer review process, with one or more independent reviewer who are chosen and managed by the Research Editor. All communications from the peer reviewers are to be sent to the Research Editor or his/her proxy Associate Editors, who shall ensure that the reviewers follow the journal’s guidelines and adhere to the confidentiality of the peer review process. The Research Editor, and his/her proxy Associate Editors, should ensure that during the peer review process manuscripts are judged on the basis of objective scientific standards and are therefore suitable for publication, and by assuring that the peer reviewer(s) do not substitute their personal opinions or conclusions as to the manuscript in question, but instead make sure that reviewers engage in critical reading, analysis, and provide constructive and meaningful feedback.

The Research Editor, and his/her proxy Associate Editors, should ask that peer reviewers decline to review a manuscript where circumstances, including but not limited to conflicts of interest, personality conflicts, or other potential bias might prevent them writing an unbiased review. The Research Editor should exercise discretion in seeking out a second or further peer reviewer’s opinion on a manuscript where it appears that the original peer reviewer may have undisclosed conflicts or interest, bias, or substituted their personal opinions or conclusions for those of the authors.

The Research Editor, and his/her proxy Associate Editors, should ensure that manuscripts are handled confidentially, and without disclosing any details of the work to anyone other than the peer reviewers without express permission of the author(s). Any and all discussions between the Research Editor, peer reviewer(s), and author(s) are deemed to have taken place in confidence they should remain in confidence unless explicit consent has been given by the parties affected, or unless there are exceptional circumstances (such as, for example, in order to investigate claims of plagiarism or intellectual property theft during peer review).

Code of Conduct for Reviewers. Peer reviewers should not circumvent the single-blind peer review process by accepting manuscripts directly from authors. Peer reviewers should ensure that manuscripts are handled confidentially, and without disclosing any details of the work to anyone other than the peer reviewers without express permission of the Research Editor and the author(s). Peer reviewers should decline to review a manuscript where circumstances, including but not limited to conflicts of interest, personality disputes, personal conflicts, or other potential bias might prevent them writing an unbiased review. Peer reviewers should strive to not substitute their personal opinions or conclusions for those of the authors. Peer reviewers should judge manuscripts on the basis of objective scientific standards and opine whether manuscripts are therefore suitable for publication. Ideally, peer reviewers should engage in critical reading, analysis, and provide constructive and meaningful feedback for the author through the Research Editor.

Code of Conduct for Editors. Members of the Editorial Board should avoid all conflicts of interest, as well as the appearance of a conflict of interest. When members of the Editorial Board are presented with manuscripts where their own interests may be perceived to impair their ability to make an unbiased editorial decision, they should withdraw from the decision making process about whether to reject a manuscript for publication. Members of the Editorial Board should strive to not allow peer reviewers or others in the editorial process to substitute their personal opinions or conclusions for those of the authors.

Editorial Independence. The Festivus has a strong policy in favor of editorial independence. The Research Editor and his/her proxy Associate Editors should be free to judge all submissions on their scholarly merit and on their potential importance to the community that our journal serves. The Editorial Board's decisions about whether to publish individual manuscripts submitted to The Festivus should not be influenced by pressure from authors, the SDSC Board, the sale of publications, or the sale of advertising.

Determination to Decline to Publish. In the event that the Research Editor determines that a particular manuscript is to be declined for publication based upon recommendations by a peer reviewer, then the Research Editor shall prepare a clear and succinct statement articulating the reasons why the manuscript in question should be declined for publication which shall be presented to the Editorial Board to review and discuss the issues and have the final say on the matter. The Editor-in-Chief shall preside as chairperson of the Editorial Board in any such circumstances. If the Editorial Board determines to decline to publish a manuscript then either the Research Editor or the Editor-in-Chief shall send written correspondence to the author(s) about that determination. All editorial decisions not to publish a manuscript are final.

Libel and Defamation. The Festivus has a long standing policy of ensuring that authors communicate their disagreement with other scientists hypotheses in a well researched and professional manner. When authors engage in personal attacks and vendettas through their published articles they can place the journal at risk of liability through a civil defamation action. The Editorial

Board of the Festivus takes a strong stand against that kind of behavior. In the event that an author is unwilling to rework or modify a manuscript to remove insulting language it bespeaks of professional jealousy, ego issues, emotional problems, or long standing personality disputes. A rebuttal paper should be well thought out, supported by facts, communicated in a professional manner, and written with the exclusive intention of improving the field of science.

Academic Debate. Differences of opinion are common in science and occasionally other professionals take the time to research and write an appropriate rebuttal paper with their hypotheses, the results of their research, and their conclusions. Such “dissenting opinions” should be firmly grounded in science and should be the result of the rebuttal author’s independent research, which should be conducted with the same degree of scientific effort and diligence as the original authors put forth, followed by the peer review process and publication.

The Editorial Board encourages correspondence and constructive criticism of the research published in the journal, and supports lively academic debate through the publication of well researched and respectful “dissenting” articles in the journal. Authors do not have a right to veto unfavourable comments about their work, but they may choose to respond, or not to respond, to such criticisms. No published correspondence may contain a personal attack on any of the authors. Criticism of the work (not the researcher) is encouraged and the Editors reserve the right to edit (or reject) a “dissenting” article to remove any personal or offensive statements. All such articles (and replies) are subject to the peer review process.

Corrections / Errata. The Editorial Board of The Festivus encourages readers and authors to notify them if they find errors, especially errors which may affect the interpretation of data, information, or conclusions presented in an article. The Editorial Board works with authors to promptly correct important published errors through the publication of Errata when errors are found. Errata will be published as open access items.