

## ***Animal Behaviour* policy regarding overlap with published abstracts**

Historically *Animal Behaviour* has operated a policy in which manuscripts are declined when the content of a previously published conference proceeding overlaps the content of the submitted manuscript. Manuscripts are assessed for prior publication on two counts: i) the essential results and message are repeated in the submitted manuscript; AND ii) the conference abstract is an official publication with an ISBN or ISSN. The number of cases in which manuscripts are declined by *Animal Behaviour* is miniscule compared with the numbers received, because the proceedings of society meetings such as ASAB/ABS, or ISBE are not formally published with ISBNs or ISSNs. However, some conference abstracts are formally published. In these cases, authors run the risk of making their future manuscripts ineligible for consideration by *Animal Behaviour*.

There are two reasons why such a policy is deemed appropriate: to protect against copyright infringement, and to preserve *Animal Behaviour*'s remit to publish high quality *original* work and thus maintain its position as a leading international journal.

It has recently become clear that potential contributors to *Animal Behaviour* are unaware of the overlap policy. Although the Information to Authors has always asked for a statement in the cover letter concerning potential overlap with conference abstracts, it has not explicitly stated that overlap is grounds for rejection, or exactly what constitutes overlap and what does not. The purpose of this note is to draw attention to the policy, and to the revised Instructions to Authors that aim to make the policy transparent. Contributors who fail to declare overlap that is later discovered are at risk of being barred from publishing in *Animal Behaviour*.

We would like to emphasize that the typically vague abstract that most of us would submit for a conference is *not* seen as prior publication. However, abstracts could be written that are bonsai versions of papers that eventually get submitted to the journal; these can be seen as prior publication. These abstracts can include explicit details of methods, results with confirmatory statistics and sometimes even figures, as well as a summary of the conclusions and implications of the results (to assist potential contributors, examples of acceptable and unacceptable abstracts can be found in the Journal section of our web site at <http://www.asab.org/>). These types of published abstracts clearly represent prior publication in a publicly-distributed journal and will be grounds for declining the full manuscripts. Authors are able to cite these abstracts as publications since they are freely available. Thus the work cannot be claimed as original.

Some societies give the option of formal publication of abstracts at the time of conference registration. To avoid problems with overlap, authors should consider carefully the potential future implications of abstract publication, and, if choosing to publish, consider the depth of detail they include in their abstracts.

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