

Report of Chief Editors of the *Journal of Vegetation Science* and *Applied Vegetation Science* to the IAVS Council (2024)

Publication output

As in previous years, the *Journal of Vegetation Science* (JVS) and *Applied Vegetation Science* (AVS) are published continuously (articles appear online shortly after they are accepted) and organized into online issues, which appear bimonthly (JVS) or quarterly (AVS). JVS published 63 articles in 2022 and 51 articles in 2023, which is well below the standard of around 120 articles in each of the previous years. However, in the period from January to June 2024, JVS published 54 articles, suggesting that the number of high-quality submissions is tending back to previous figures. AVS published 54 articles in 2023 and a further 23 articles in the period January-June 2024, which is below the standard of around 70 articles annually in previous years.

Editors and Editorial Board

Both journals are edited by an international team of 119 editors, including 4 Chief Editors, 55 Associate Editors (30 for JVS, 19 for AVS and 6 joint for both journals), 59 Editorial Review Board members (33 for JVS, 23 for AVS and 3 joint for both journals) and 1 Consulting Editor. Of the four Chief Editors, Milan Chytrý (CZ) served as Chair of the Editors, Valério Pillar (BR) and Viktoria Wagner (CA) as the Receiving Editors for JVS and Jodi Price (AU) as the Receiving Editor for AVS. New Associate Editors were mainly recruited from the Editorial Review Board members, which is reflected in a slight decrease in the number of Editorial Review Board members compared to 2023. Some senior colleagues with editorial experience were also invited to serve as Associate Editors without having previously served on the Editorial Review Board. These included three former Associate Editors of the *Journal of Biogeography* after the Editorial Board of that journal resigned *en masse* due to disagreements with the publisher.

Double-blind review procedure

At the JVS/AVS Editorial Meeting in Coffs Harbour (September 2023), most Editorial Board members supported the change of the review procedure from single-blind (single-anonymized; reviewers' identities are unknown to the authors, but authors' identities are known to the reviewers) to double-blind (double-anonymized; the authors do not know the identity of the reviewers, and conversely, the reviewers do not know the identity of the authors). This was motivated by research by Fox et al. (2023, *Functional Ecology*, 37, 1144–1157), who found positive biases in reviewers' evaluation of ecological manuscripts submitted by authors from richer or English-speaking countries that were independent of manuscript quality. From February 2024, all manuscripts newly submitted to JVS or AVS must be split into two files: a title page file and a main text file. The title page file contains the authors' names, affiliations, acknowledgements, the funding statement, and the author contribution statement. The main text file contains the anonymized scientific part of the manuscript. Both files are available to the editors, but the reviewers only receive the anonymized main text file. We believe this change has contributed to fairness, equality and inclusivity in publishing in the IAVS journals. However, following the introduction of this procedure, we have noticed that it causes small delays in manuscript processing at the Wiley Editorial Office. We are in contact with Wiley officers to resolve this issue.

Editorial Office and Production

The Editorial Office and Production of both journals continue to be run by Wiley after the contract with IAVS was renewed in 2023. Our work continued to be negatively impacted by the frequent staff changes at Wiley. Rosie Trice replaced Gillian Greenough as a Senior Journals Publishing Manager. Jordan Tayler was replaced by Katherine Ward as an Associate Managing Editor, who was later replaced by Lincoln Zhang. Carmen Sherry was replaced by Annkatrin Halbig as a Production Manager, who was later replaced by Isis Ng. Elizabeth Sudit ended her work as a Journal Publishing Assistant. Only Anila Vezhakatte remained in the position of Editorial Assistant and Sathish Kannan Asokan in the position of Production Editor. In the last two years, there has been a change of personnel in all positions related to our journals, and in some positions, there has even been more than one change. This causes problems because new employees often do not stick to what was previously discussed and agreed upon. It also requires that journal editors have to spend more time repeatedly discussing various issues with the Editorial Office and Production staff.

Cover photos

As in previous years, Chief Editors opened a contest for journal cover photos. The winners for the 2024 covers were TJ Watt (JVS cover picture showing an epiphytic community of lichens, bryophytes and ferns on the branches of *Picea sitchensis* in British Columbia) and Adolf Češka (AVS cover picture of a Pacific coastal bog with *Pinus contorta* on Vancouver Island, Canada). A selection of other images submitted to the photo contest was published in the IAVS Bulletin.

Editors' Awards

The JVS and AVS Editor's Awards for 2023 went to Gabriel Moulatlet and Aure Durbecq for the articles:

- Moulatlet, G.M., Kusumoto, B., Pinto-Ledezma, J., Shiono, T., Kubota, Y. & Villalobos, F. (2023) Global patterns of phylogenetic beta-diversity components in angiosperms. *Journal of Vegetation Science*, 34, e13203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jvs.13203>
- Durbecq, A., Bischoff, A., Buisson, E., Corcket, E. & Jaunatre, R. (2023) Using priority effects for grassland restoration: sequential sowing can promote subordinate species. *Applied Vegetation Science*, 26, e12748. <https://doi.org/10.1111/avsc.12748>

Scientometric indicators

The Impact Factors (IF) of both JVS and AVS have decreased in two consecutive years, 2022 and 2023, after having risen in 2021:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
JVS IF	2.698	2.685	3.389	2.8	2.2
AVS IF	2.574	3.270	3.431	2.8	2.0

The Chief Editors are concerned about the decline in IFs and are discussing measures to reverse the negative trend of the last two years. However, it can be observed that the IFs decreased for most journals in the fields of Ecology and Plant Sciences. Consequently, JVS's ranking in the Forestry category is actually one percentile higher than in the previous year, and in the Plant Sciences category, it is only one percentile lower. The current IF decrease is most likely the result of the high number of covid-stimulated articles published in 2021 and a relatively low number published in 2023. The articles from 2021 thus received a low number of citations on average in 2023. If this is true, the IFs should stabilize and increase next year. However, AVS shows a declining trend even in percentiles, and we need to work to reverse this trend.

Special Features

Special Issues attract authors to publish more articles in JVS and AVS, and they are also well received by readers. Therefore, they are actively supported by Chief Editors.

- AVS Special Issue *Grazing effects on vegetation* (edited by Péter Török, HU, Regina Lindborg, SE, David Eldridge, AU, and Robin Pakeman, UK) was finished in 2024.
- AVS Special Issue *Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area: Evolution, Threats and Conservation* (Nick Reid, Colin Bale, David Keith, Melinda Laidlaw and Jodi Price, all AU) was proposed by the organizers of a Special Session on Australian Gondwana rainforests at the IAVS Symposium in Coffs Harbour in September 2023. However, no manuscript has been submitted so far, and it is unclear whether this Special Issue will be realized.
- JVS Special Issue *Plant community responses to climate change* (edited by Richard Michalet, FR, Jiří Doležal, CZ, Jonathan Lenoir, FR, Peter Leroux, ZA, Sabine Rumpf, CH, and Sonia Wipf, CH) is at an advanced stage of preparation, with several articles already published.
- JVS Special Issue *Biological Invasions in Plant Communities* (edited by Viktoria Wagner, CA, Marta Carboni, IT, Kwek Yan Chong, SG, Milan Chytrý, CZ, and Anaclara Guido, UY) is in preparation. Some articles are already under review.
- JVS Special Issue *Alpine vegetation and global change* (edited by Gwendolyn Peyre, CO, Susanna Venn, AU, Mark Hovenden, AU, Anke Jentsch, DE, Jiří Doležal, CZ and Borja Jiménez-Alfaro, ES) is partly based on a special session at the 2023 IAVS Symposium in Coffs Harbour but will also include other articles. The Special Issue is in the preparation phase.
- JVS Special Issue *Island plant communities: natural experiments at the intersection of biogeography, conservation and global change ecology* (edited by Alessandro Chiarucci, IT, Jorge Capelo, PT, and Julian Schrader, AU) will be based on the main theme of the IAVS Symposium in Funchal, Madeira, in September 2024. The Special Issue has already been announced, and it is expected that most manuscripts will be submitted after the 2024 IAVS Symposium.

Currently, we need proposals for new Special Issues especially for AVS.

VegSciBlog and social media

VegSciBlog, under the direction of David Zelený, continued to disseminate editorial news and information about JVS and AVS articles provided by the authors (Plain language summaries or Behind-the-paper stories). Once the blog articles are published, links to the blog are posted on the IAVS Facebook group and on the journals' Twitter accounts, increasing the visibility of the journals' content.

Milan Chytrý (Chair of the Editors), with Jodi Price, Valério Pillar and Viktoria Wagner

4 August 2024