

Flipping from subscription to Open Access – a case study

Johan Nilsson

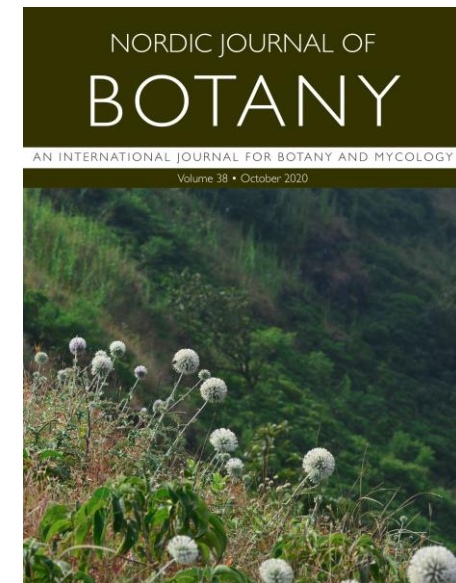
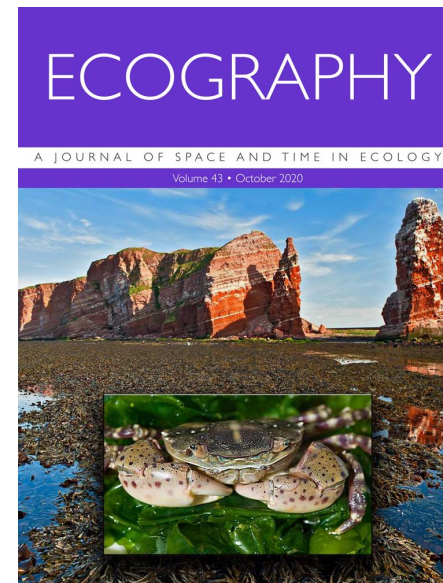
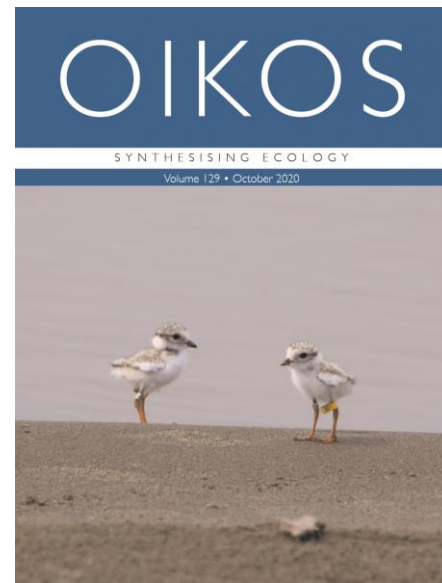
Associate Director, Oikos Editorial Office



Nordic Society Oikos

(Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland)

Ecological society publishing 4 journals with Wiley



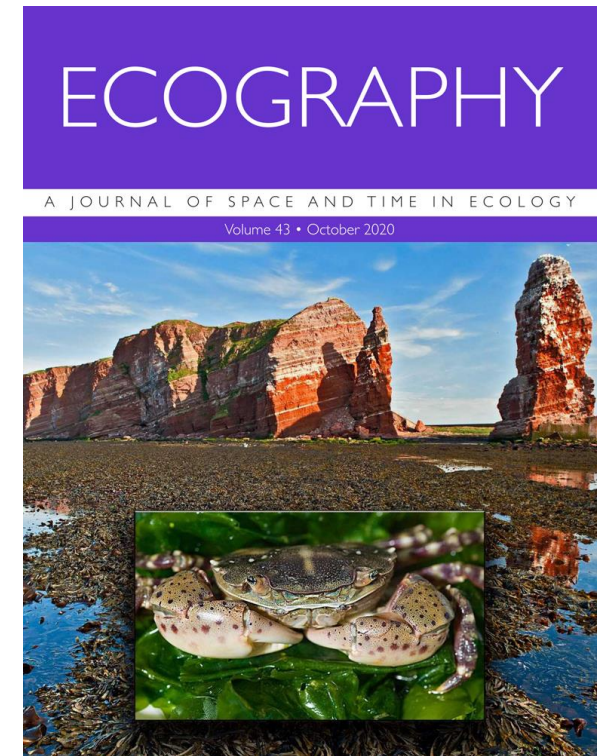
Why Open Access?

- Commitment to Open Science
- Uncertain future for subscription income
- Need to diversify the income



Why Ecography?

- High profile journal
- Relatively low subscription revenue
- Strong authorbase in Europe/North America



The decision

- Some concerns within the Editorial Board
- Decision to start with a low APC (\$2200)
- Ongoing discussions about discounts



May 2019
Decision made



August 2019
Submission system changed

January 2020
First OA issue is published



The flip

- Mostly positive reactions
- Detailed communication plan
- Open letter from the Society's board, explaining why the journal was flipped



Submissions

- We planned for a 20% decrease in submissions the year following the flip
- Comparing 2020 (predicted) with 2018 or 2019, submissions are only down a few percentage



Authorship – changes in submissions

Increase in submissions

China +++

Canada +++

Netherlands +++

Switzerland ++

New Zealand ++

Germany +

Decrease in submissions

Brazil - - -

Denmark - - -

Mexico - - -

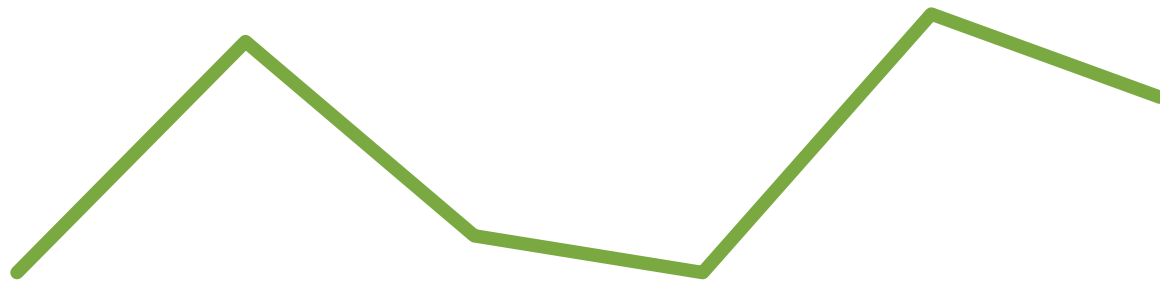
Australia - -

Spain - -

Sweden - -



Accepted manuscripts



Small effect on number of accepted manuscripts

Most of the lost manuscripts would not have been published anyway...

2015

2016

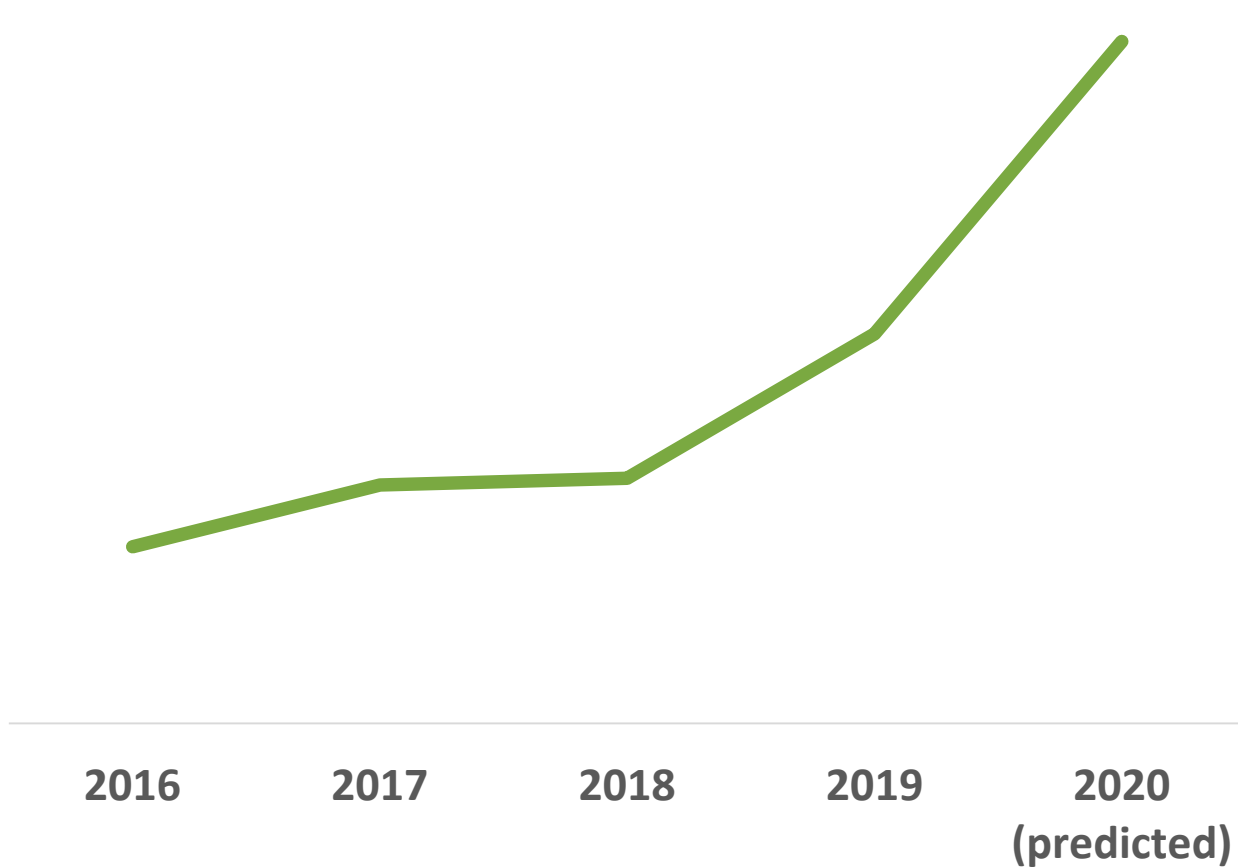
2017

2018

2019

2020
predicted

Article downloads



Large increase in
downloads

All content back to 1996 is
free to access

Conclusions

- Few negative reactions
- Small impact on submissions and output
- Increased revenue
- Increase in downloads



What made the flip successful?

- High proportion of authors that were positive towards OA
- Prestigious journal
- Highest Impact factor ever the year after the flip
- Being a Society journal helped!

