

Editorial 2026

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After one year of joint leadership by Laura A. Katz and Maud I. Tenaillon at the helm of *Genome Biology and Evolution* (GBE), the time has come to take stock. As one of two journals owned and operated by the Society of Molecular Biology and Evolution (SMBE), the journal's editorial policy remains unchanged: to publish scientifically robust research, including studies focusing on still under-studied questions of interest or model organisms to (as of now) small communities of scientists. This commitment to inclusive publishing is accompanied by sustained attention to both the rigor and the efficiency of the peer-review process. In this editorial, we aim to provide readers and authors with a clear understanding of our manuscript handling process, highlighting our key initiatives for 2026 to further strengthen the visibility and influence of the journal.

As Editors-in-Chief, we handle all manuscripts that we receive (534 in 2025), providing an initial evaluation before sending to associate editors. We then rely on a board of internationally recognized associate editors whose expertise spans a broad range of topics in evolutionary biology. Each year, we add board members based on their expertise in areas represented by recent submissions. Recognizing the value in having a diverse range of perspectives, we also work to maintain a board who come from a wide range of geographical locations and who represent a plurality of career stages and institution types. We meet regularly with the board, and we have frequent informal exchanges about submitted manuscripts.

Although GBE is a well-established society journal widely recognized within the evolutionary biology community, it is not immune to the challenges currently facing most journals in our disciplines, including increased

competition for articles and a decline in impact factor. The proliferation of predatory journals has expanded the range of publication outlets, attracting some authors with faster, but often less rigorous, review processes. In this evolving landscape, GBE must therefore identify new niches, enhance its attractiveness, and increase its visibility.

To recruit additional manuscripts, we have launched two major calls for submissions. The first focuses on methods papers, and aims to reflect the pivotal moment currently shaping our fields. High-throughput omics technologies are now accompanied by major methodological advances, enabled in part by artificial intelligence. In particular, recent developments in machine learning and deep learning, combined with conceptual progress in population genomics and other comparative approaches, are profoundly reshaping our understanding of both micro- and macroevolutionary processes. To support the community in this rapidly expanding methodological landscape, GBE is launching a new Methods section dedicated to theoretical advances, methodological innovation, and critical assessments of existing approaches. The aim is to guide researchers in the selection and application of appropriate tools, clarify methodological assumptions and limitations, and promote best practices in evolutionary inference.

The second initiative reflects GBE's recognition of the central role evolutionary biology plays in addressing the rapid erosion of biodiversity, and launches a call for submissions in conservation genomics. Identifying robust criteria for designating threatened species, measuring and predicting the impacts of habitat degradation, species exploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive species on population declines are major challenges to

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which our disciplines can provide essential insights. We also encourage the submission of genome resources for endangered and threatened species.

As another means of promoting the journal, we have put substantial efforts into strengthening our presence on social media, producing regular highlights (one per month). These initiatives have been supported by the SMBE, notably through the recruitment of Pedro Andrade and the launch of the SMBE Fellows program, two initiatives that span both Society journals (i.e. GBE and MBE). The Fellows program recruits early-career scientists (PhD students and postdoctoral researchers) by offering them experience in science communication through the writing of highlights. Dr. Andrade works with the team of Fellows helping them build their professional networks via regular interaction with the Editors in Chief and participation in SMBE conferences.

Finally, we are continuing to evaluate the extent to which GBE supports a diversity of scientists. In a recent initiative, we collaborated with Oxford University Press, our publisher, to collect data for David Alvarez-Ponce's analyses on citation patterns by perceived gender (determined using an automated name-based approach) as well as geographical location of authors (i.e. Global South vs. North). Consistent with trends observed in

other scientific journals, women first authors are cited less frequently than men, though we are happy to see that this does not hold true for corresponding authors (Alvarez-Ponce 2026). Also as expected, authors from the Global South are cited at lower rates than those from the north (Alvarez-Ponce 2026). In response to these findings, we will work to highlight articles that capture the diversity of authors in terms of gender and geographic location. We also emphasize that Highlights now include a brief biographical note and a picture of the lead authors, directly connecting recognition of their work to the broader goal of fostering diversity and equity in scientific visibility.

Together, these actions strengthen GBE's engagement with the evolutionary biology community and support the dissemination of advances in the field—an objective that is more critical than ever in today's scientific landscape.

Literature Cited

Alvarez-Ponce D. The gender and geographic location of authors impact citation rates of GBE papers. *Genome Biol Evol.* 2026;18:evag090. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gbe/evag090>.

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