

# Guidelines for Reviewers

Many thanks for accepting to review a manuscript submitted to the *Journal van Syrphidae* (*JvS*). The peer review system is an essential part of ensuring quality in scientific publishing, and we greatly appreciate the fact that you have accepted this responsibility as a token of ‘mutual altruism’! Indeed, as you are now devoting your time to help improve the work of a colleague, your peers will do the same for you when you submit a manuscript for publication. To help to ensure that publishing scientists also act as referees, *JvS* considers it a gentlemen’s agreement that its published authors also act as referees for other manuscripts submitted to the journal.

## *Scope of the journal*

*JvS* is an international, fully electronic, Open Access journal covering all aspects of the Syrphidae, but especially interested in descriptive taxonomy. *JvS* papers must be original and of high scientific (content) and technical (language, art work, etc) standard. Manuscripts that are clearly sub-standard in either of these categories will not be sent out for review. *JvS* is published through the Syrphidae Foundation and has a worldwide scope. Authors are invited to involve natural history collections by consulting extant material, or by depositing (type-) material related to the published paper in the collection of a Natural History Institute.

Editors will check if a manuscript falls within the scope of the journal before the submission is sent out to reviewers.

## *Standards of the Journal*

Both scientific and technical standards of *JvS* are high.

*Scientific*: please make sure that the Introduction introduces the content of the paper in a sound manner, and that Material and Methods are complete and will allow repeatability. In the Results, ensure that descriptions are sound, complete and appropriate, that the rules of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature are followed, that locations of type material (including coordinates) of new taxa are given, etc. All papers should end with a discussion, even if only short, clearly outlining the wider relevance of the work presented.

The scope of *JvS* is global, but short faunistic/floristic notes, checklists of limited geographical areas (e.g. a country) etc., will also be considered. Single-species descriptions can only be accepted if the relevance of the new taxon can be demonstrated (e.g. a description of single new species in a speciose genus will not be considered).

Describing a new species from a single specimen is discouraged, see Aim of the journal

*Technical*: only papers in English will be considered, and the English should not be sub-standard. Authors can use their own style as long as the manuscript is linguistically correct. American, UK or Australian styles of English are acceptable, as long as they are consistent within the entire manuscript. Illustrations must be of high quality and very detailed. *JvS* may distribute published taxonomic treatments and specimen citations (occurrence records) to biodiversity databases in XML format. In order to harvest data from the articles accurately, we ask authors to follow certain standardised formats in these sections. For more information, see the Fair & Open Science section at the end of this text.

## *Your recommendation to the editors*

We ask you to assess the manuscript in the light of the scope of *JvS*, as well as of its technical and scientific standards. The style and length of your assessment is completely open and free. After having written your assessment, which will be forwarded to the authors, you can also enter blind comments which will be read only by the handling editor and the editor-in-chief. If you wish to remain anonymous, please do not enter your name or initials in the file name.

Please recommend any of the following decisions:

***Revise before review:*** if you think that the English is so sub-standard that it is impossible to review the paper, or the quality of the figures and tables makes them unreadable, or for any other technical reason you think it impossible to review the paper in its present state, then please recommend this option and explain the problem to the editor. If this is the case, then we apologize, as our initial editorial screening should have prevented such sub-standard papers being sent out for review.

***Accept:*** in your opinion the paper is now ready to go into production as it is. No more minor changes are needed, and the language is acceptable.

***Acceptable with minor revisions:*** the paper is technically and scientifically sound, and only minor corrections are needed, e.g. missing references, some sentences or the title or the abstract need to be rephrased, some figures and/or tables are redundant or not clear, etc. Acceptance is guaranteed if these problems are adequately addressed.

***Revisions needed:*** some more serious revision is needed. The introduction is incomplete; material and methods are unclear; illustrations and/or descriptions are substandard, etc. Acceptance is not necessarily guaranteed.

***Major revisions are needed:*** there are serious problems with the paper. The assumptions are wrong, the introduction does not address the question at hand, the materials and methods might be faulty, results are confused and complete analyses and illustrations are needed, discussion does not address the results nor is the literature adequate, etc. Basically, the manuscript will need to be seriously redone, but it will essentially remain the same story. Acceptance is NOT guaranteed, because replies to questions as the above might reveal fundamental flaws, which will then lead to rejection. If you recommend major revision, please indicate if you are willing to undertake a re-revision.

***Rejected, without possibility to resubmit:*** the paper is either out of scope (see above), or technical and/or scientific standards are below those of the journal, for example if fatal flaws in the methods, results and/ or discussions are detected. Examples of this can be the description of taxa clearly synonymous with already existing ones, descriptions or illustrations that do not meet the standards in the field, etc.

Suggested: below, we list some questions that we would like you to address in your referee report. Many thanks in advance.

Is the contribution new and original?

Is it as concise as possible or could some parts of the text, figures and tables be moved to Electronic Supplementary Material?

Is the abstract as concise as possible? Does it contain all the taxonomic changes? Will it be useful for systematic databases?

Does the paper follow the IMRAD structure (Introduction, Material and Methods, Results, General Discussion)?

Is the taxonomic science up to standard:

Do the authors follow the appropriate nomenclature rules?

Do descriptions of new taxa address all relevant issues (etymology, deposition of type material, localisation of type and other localities, measurements, differential diagnosis, description, ...)?

Is the technical and scientific quality of the line drawings and/or illustrations acceptable?

Does the manuscript require improvement of language?

Is the list of references sufficiently comprehensive?

### **Fair & Open Science**

The *Journal van Syrphidae* supports the principles of Open Science through Diamond Open Access publishing. In accordance with the FAIR principles, the journal also can apply an XML conversion scheme to optimise the findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability of biodiversity data.

By using standardised formatting, taxonomic treatments and specimen data can be identified and extracted from an article using Extensible Markup Language (XML). Once converted into a machine-readable format, this data becomes interoperable with other biodiversity information on a worldwide scale.

*JvS* is entitled to submit all extracted treatments, specimen citations and article metadata to the Plazi Treatment Bank and GBIF; figures, along with their captions, are uploaded to the Zenodo Biodiversity Literature Repository. These stable, free-to-use, international platforms collect, archive and index scientific data, assigning DOIs to sub-article elements and datasets while giving explicit credit to the original author and publication, which facilitates research and improves citations.

To achieve optimal results, we propose that authors who publish in *JvS* use certain formats and controlled vocabularies that will allow the rich data within their articles to be accurately harvested and efficiently disseminated. Detailed guidelines on how to conform can be found in the ‘Specimen Citations Formatting Guide’.