

Instructions for authors

The Raptor Journal (formerly known as Slovak Raptor Journal) is an open-access journal indexed in the Scopus database since 2019. The journal has no article publication charge and publishes blind peer-reviewed articles on all aspects of the biology, ecology and ethology of raptors and owls, e.g., original studies, reviews, short notes and other papers related to the main journal scope (e.g., project reports, bibliographies, etc.).

The manuscripts are accepted for consideration if neither the article nor any part of its essential substance (e.g., tables and/or figures) has been or will be published or submitted elsewhere before appearing in the Raptor Journal.

Raptor Journal is usually published once a year, except for special issues. Single articles are published Ahead of Print (also known as 'early bird' or 'online first') as soon as they are accepted and prepared for publication.

Overview of the editorial process

One copy of the manuscript must be submitted electronically in the English language (British English) in Word (preferred) or Writer of PDF format. **Manuscripts should be sent to: srj@dravce.sk or Marek Kouba (Editor-in-Chief): kouba@dravce.sk.**

Submission

Each manuscript should be accompanied by a cover letter. The cover letter should detail what is being submitted, that the manuscript has not been previously published in any language anywhere, and that it is not under simultaneous consideration by another journal. Authors have to state their authority to publish the work.

Peer review process and choice of reviewers

A submission may be declined by the Editor without review if the studies reported are not sufficiently novel or important to merit publication in the journal. Manuscripts deemed unsuitable (insufficient originality or of limited interest to the target audience) are returned to the author(s) without review. The Editor-in-Chief may appoint an Editor, with expertise in the relevant field, who is fully responsible for further handling the manuscript and the ultimate decision about its acceptance/rejection. Research articles and communications are refereed by a minimum of two reviewers, and the review process is single-blind.

Suggestions for authors

The reviewers make an objective, impartial evaluation of the scientific merits of the manuscript. Reviewers operate under guidelines outlined in the Peer review of the paper and are asked to comment on the following aspects of submitted manuscripts: 1. Does the work presented in the paper contain enough new material to warrant publication? 2. Is the paper scientifically sound and not misleading? 3. Is the paper suitable for the Raptor Journal (RJ publishes original papers, reviews, short notes, and other articles focusing on birds of prey)? 4. Is the article correct and of high scientific quality? 5. Is the article organised in a clear and easy-to-understand manner? 6. Are the literature citations appropriate and adequate? 7. Are the descriptions of methods, tables of data, etc., sufficient for understanding the presented work? 7. Is the art quality of the figures appropriate for the presented work?

If a manuscript is believed not to meet the standards of the journal or is otherwise lacking in scientific rigour or contains major deficiencies, the reviewers will attempt to provide constructive criticism to assist the authors in ultimately improving their work. If a manuscript is believed to be potentially acceptable for publication but needs to be improved, it is invited for reconsideration with the expectation that the authors will fully address the reviewer's suggestions. Once all reviews have been received and considered by the Editor, a decision letter to the author is drafted. There are several types of decisions possible: 1. Accept, 2. Minor revision, 3. Major revision or 4. Reject.

Revised manuscript submission

When a revision of a manuscript is requested, authors should return the revised version of their manuscript as soon as possible. If it is the first revision of an article, authors need to return their revised manuscript within 30 days. If it is the second revision, authors need to return their revised manuscript within 30 days. If the authors are unable to meet the specified deadline, it is necessary to ask the editor for an extension of the deadline. If these deadlines are not met, the manuscript will be treated as a new one with a new registration date.

When authors revise their article, they submit: a clean Manuscript (with accepted changes), a Manuscript with tracked changes and a third file with their responses to all comments raised by the reviewer/s and/or editor/s.

Final proofreading

Authors will receive a PDF file with the edited version of their manuscript for final proofreading. This is the last opportunity to view an article before its publication on the journal website. No changes or modifications can be introduced once it is published. Thus, authors are requested to check their proof pages carefully against the manuscript within 10 working days and prepare a separate document containing all changes that should be introduced. Authors are sometimes asked to provide additional comments and explanations in response to remarks and queries from the language or technical editors.

Duration of the review procedure

The average length of the review procedure in 2022 and 2023 (vol. 16, 17) was 145 days (range: 16 – 403).

Immediate publication

Manuscripts ready for publication are promptly posted online. The manuscripts are considered to be ready for publication when the final proofreading has been performed by the authors and all concerns have been resolved. Authors should notice that no changes can be made to the articles after online publication.

Erratum / Author Correction

If any errors are detected in the published material, they should be reported to the Journal Editor. The corresponding authors should send the appropriate corrected material to the journal editor via email. This material will be considered for publication as soon as feasible.

General guidelines for manuscripts

Manuscripts should be prepared using a proportional font such as Times New Roman in 12-point size. There is no space limit for manuscript submissions; however, manuscripts longer than 12,000 words will first be discussed by the editorial board. In the manuscript, the person responsible for manuscript negotiations (the corresponding author) must be identified. Main Document of an original studies is as follows: (1) Title page, (2) Abstract and Keywords, (3) Author's name(s) and Address(es), (4) Acknowledgments, (5) Introduction, (6) Materials and Methods, (7) Results, (8) Discussion, (9) References, (10) Appendix (11) Online Supplementary Materials, (12) Figure legends and table captions. The Tables and Illustration files should be prepared separately from the Main Document file. Short notes (usually) should not be longer than four A4 pages, excluding a list of references. The short notes should be divided into the same sections as the original study. Use metric units throughout the manuscript.

One copy of the manuscript must be submitted electronically in the English language in Word (preferred) or Writer of PDF format. Manuscripts should be sent to: srj@dravce.sk or Marek Kouba (Editor-in-Chief): kouba@dravce.sk.

The entire document should be 1.5 lines-spaced and must contain page and line numbering to facilitate the review process. The text should be structured in the chapters as follows:

TITLE

The title should be concise, omitting implicit terms and, where possible, be a statement of the main result or conclusion presented in the manuscript. Abbreviations should be avoided within the title.

ABSTRACT

No longer than 300 words, entirely without references. The abstract will also be published in Slovak. For non-Slovakian-speaking authors, the Raptor Journal will provide the Slovak translation.

KEYWORDS

All article types require a minimum of five and a maximum of eight keywords. Keywords should not contain expressions already used in the paper title.

AUTHOR'S NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

All names are listed together and separated by commas. Provide exact and correct author names in the required order.

Below, provide the authors' affiliations (marked by numbering in the superscript). Provide the following information in a given order: organisation, address, city (with zip code) and country.

Provide the contact email address behind the name of the corresponding author.

If authors use ORCID ID, provide them in a separate section for each author (ORCID – author name: ORCID NUMBER; author name 2: ORCID NUMBER; etc.).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It should be a short text to acknowledge the contributions of specific colleagues, institutions or grants that allowed or financially supported the presented study.

INTRODUCTION

This section should provide enough background information to make it clear why the study was undertaken and should clearly describe the objectives

of the study. Lengthy literature reviews are discouraged. The aims/hypotheses of the study should be presented in the last paragraph. Succinct, with no subheadings.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This section includes the Study area and may be divided by subheadings and should contain sufficient details so that when read in conjunction with cited references, all procedures can be repeated.

RESULTS

Results should be presented by referring to tables and figures and without discussion. Avoid repeating in the text lists of numerical values that are also presented in tables; however, reference to peak or other noteworthy values is permissible. This section may be divided into subheadings.

DISCUSSION

This section should at least include a concise summary of the principal findings, a discussion of the validity of the observations, a discussion of how the findings relate to other published works dealing with the same subject, and a discussion of the significance of the work. Results and Discussion sections may be combined in exceptional and justified cases as a Results and Discussion section. This section may be divided into subheadings.

REFERENCES

The journal reference style is available for Zotero (style was uploaded), Mendeley, Papers and EndNote. Templates are available at: <https://www.dravce.sk/web/index.php/sk/pokyny-pre-autorov>

In-text citations:

(Krištofík et al. 2009), (Tapfer 1973), (Mebis & Scherzinger 2000), Haraszthy et al. (1996), (Krištofík et al. 2009, Tapfer 1973, Mebis & Scherzinger 2000), (Obuch 1979, 1980, 1982).

In case that article has the same author(s) and year of publication, use small letters in alphabetical order to separate them (e.g. Obuch 1985a, Obuch 1985b).

Article

Use the full Journal names in the Bibliography section. If available, please always include the DOI numbers of all references.

Krištofík J, Mašán P, Šustek Z & Karaska D 2009: Arthropods in the nests of lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*). *Biologia* 64(5): 974–980. DOI: 10.2478/s11756-009-0148-x.

Tapfer D 1973: Der Kaiseradler in Pannonien. *Der Falke* 20: 402–407.

The titles of articles not written in English, German, French, or Spanish have to be translated into English with the original language in square brackets at the end:

Balát F 1948: Opětné hnízdění orla mořského (*Haliaetus albicilla*) v Podunají [Repeated breeding of the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaetus albicilla*) in Danube area]. *Sylvia* 9–10: 72–73. [In Czech with English summary]

Book

Mebis T & Scherzinger W 2000: *Die Eulen Europas*. Franckh-Kosmos Verlag Stuttgart.

Book chapter / proceedings chapter

Haraszthy L, Bagyura J, Szitta T, Petrovics Z & Viszló L 1996: Biology, status and conservation of the imperial eagle *Aquila heliaca* in Hungary, 425–428. In: Meyburg B-U & Chancellor RD (eds), *Eagle Studies*. World Working Group on Birds of Prey Berlin, London & Paris.

E Book / online database / webpage

Johnson A 2000: *Abstract Computing Machines*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg. Retrieved March 30, 2006, from <http://springerlink.com/content/w25154>. DOI: 10.1007/b138965.

Walker J 1996: APA-style citations of electronic resources. Retrieved November 21, 2001, from <http://www.cas.usf.edu/english/walker/apa.html>.

Theses and dissertations

Noga M 2007: Zimovanie a potravná ekológia myšiakov ušatých (*Asio otus*) na juhozápadnom Slovensku [Wintering and dietary ecology of the Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) in South-Western Slovakia]. Master's thesis. Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University Bratislava, 107. [In Slovak with English summary].

Software / AI tools

R Core Team 2025: R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. Retrieved from <https://www.R-project.org/>.

Grammarly 2025: Retrieved from <https://www.grammarly.com/>.

FIGURES AND TABLES

Tables and figures should complement the text and not repeat facts already stated in the manuscript (no duplications). All figures must be submitted separately, with the number written in the name. All images must have a resolution of 300 dpi at the final size. Images may be submitted in black & white mode or colour mode RGB. The TIF/TIFF (.tif/.tiff) and JPEG (.jpg) formats of figures are accepted. Provide all figure captions at the end of the manuscript. The Arabic numbers should be used consecutively in the same order as the figures appear in the text. Abbreviations should be used in the main text and Figure captions (i.e., Fig. 1, Fig. 2, etc.). Use the word “Figure” only to start a sentence. The figure and table captions will also be published in Slovak. For non-Slovakian-speaking authors, the Raptor Journal will provide the Slovak translation.

Tables should be inserted at the end of the manuscript in an editable format. Tables should be typed neatly, each in a separate file, with the captions above and, if appropriate, notes below. Captions should be preceded by the appropriate label (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, etc.). The Arabic numbers should be used consecutively in the same order as the tables appear in the text. All abbreviations in figures and tables must be explained in the caption or under the table. Do not

use vertical lines. Use horizontal lines above and below the main headings and at the bottom of the table only (not within the table). Use abbreviations (e.g. Tab. 1, Tab. 2) in text.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of obscure or specialised measurement units, quantity units, chemical names, and other technical terms in the body of the paper should be used only after these have been defined clearly in the place they first appear in the text. However, abbreviations that would be recognised by scientists outside the author's field may be used without definition, such as PCR, P, SD, DNA, and RNA. The metric system should be used for all measurements, and standard metric abbreviations should, in general, be expressed without periods.

Units of measurement not preceded by a number should not be abbreviated, e.g., "all units are given in millimetres". There should be a space between

a value and its unit, e.g., 20 mM, 42 µl. However, °C and % have no space, e.g., 10°C, 85%. Mathematical symbols such as =, ±, >, <, etc. should be preceded

and followed by a space, e.g., "length = 5 mm" rather than "length=5mm". Abbreviations of genus names should be avoided at their first use for each species, both in the Abstract section and in the following main text.

APPENDIX AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

You can also publish information in an Appendix (published behind References in the article) and/or Supplementary materials (published online on the publisher's journal web page). In the main text, full captions (Appendix/Supplementary) should be used.

The supplementary materials can be uploaded as follows:

Data sheet (Word, Excel, CSV, PDF or Zip files)*, image (CDX, EPS, JPEG, PDF, PNG or TIF/TIFF), table (Word, Excel, CSV or PDF), audio (MP3, WAV or WMA), video (AVI, DIVX, MOV, MP4, MPEG, MPG).

*At the beginning of the data sheet, please add the Journal name, title, author list, affiliations, and correspondence in the supplementary files. (e.g., see <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/srj-2024-0005?tab=related-materials>).

NOMENCLATURE

English bird names should follow the most recent list: <http://www.worldbirdnames.org/>. All English species' names should be written in small letters in the manuscript (except for original names, e.g., Tengmalm's owl, Ural owl, etc.). At the first mention of a species in the text, give both its English and scientific name (scientific name written in brackets). Both the English and scientific names are written in brackets, separated by a comma, e.g.: (saker falcon, *Falco cherrug*). When mentioning individual species in the text again, use the English name only. Using scientific names in the whole text is possible only in special cases and after consultation with the Editor. Use the italic font for the scientific names of species.

AI use by authors

If the author of a submitted manuscript has used written or visual content produced by or edited using generative AI technology, such use must be mentioned in the methods section if applicable. This explanation must list the name, version, model, and source of the generative AI technology.

ETHICS APPROVAL STATEMENT

Authors are responsible for ensuring that their data, biological material, and methods used in the study were approved (or granted the exemption) by the appropriate institutional and/or national research ethics committee and certify that the study was performed in accordance with their national ethical standards.

If the research was conducted based on a government permit or was approved by the Ethics Committee of the relevant institution, **the authors shall mention this in the Ethics Approval section before References.**

USE OF AI TOOLS

Guidelines for authors

AI tools may be used for manuscript refinement (e.g., language improvement, formatting), **but not for** creating, altering, or manipulating research data, images, or measurements. AI tools do not qualify for authorship, as they can't be held accountable for all aspects of the work. An AI tool should not be included in the author list of a manuscript (Paradigma).

Authors who use AI tools in the writing of a manuscript, production of images or graphical elements of the paper, or in the collection and analysis of data, **must be transparent in disclosing in the Materials and Methods (section AI tools)** of the paper how the AI tool was used and which tool was used. Authors are fully responsible for the content of their manuscript, even those parts produced by an AI tool, and are thus liable for any breach of publication ethics (COPE,2024). If no AI tool/s was/were used in preparing the manuscript, the following sentence **MUST** be included at the end of the Materials and Methods section: **“The authors honestly declare that AI tools were not used in any way during the creation of this work.”**

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Reviews should be written solely by the assigned reviewer. AI-generated reviews are not accountable or verifiable. Manuscripts under review **must never be uploaded to public AI tools platforms**, as this may violate confidentiality agreements and intellectual property rights. If a reviewer suspects undisclosed AI use in a submission, they should report it to the handling editor for investigation (Paradigma).

COMPETING INTERESTS

We strongly recommend including a **Competing Interests section at the end of your manuscript**, immediately before the reference list. If there are multiple authors, the authors' initials should be used to indicate different competing interests.

For example: *“TW completed paid consultancy work from [company name] as part of the data acquisition for this study. BH has minority shares in [company name], which partly funded the research grant for this project. SM is a member of the editorial board for [journal name] but*

had no involvement in any editorial processes related to the handling of this submission. All other authors have no competing interests.”

If there are no competing interests, we suggest adding the following statement:

“The author(s) declare no competing interests.

References:

COPE Council. COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) position 2024 - Authorship and AI - English.
<https://doi.org/10.24318/cCVRZBms>

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