Basic rules when revising manuscripts

* The purpose of any a revision is to strengthen the manuscript – not to have an exchange of ideas with the editor or the reviewers.
* So, you have to make a change ***in the manuscript*** in response to each reviewer comment.
* Responding without revising the manuscript is useless, because your readers will have the same thoughts/confusion/questions as the reviewers – but they can’t see the response document.

Make the editor’s life easy

* Please show in the response document how you revised the manuscript by copying the revised text from the manuscript, and providing line numbers were the new text can be found.
* Number all reviewer comments so that you can refer to them easily.
* However, do not include the same revised text in response to multiple comments. Instead, refer to your earlier response.
* If the journal requests a version of the revised manuscript with track changes, please add comment boxes that state in response to which reviewer comment the text was changed.

Thank the reviewers in the acknowledgements

* Do it right now. Very embarrassing when you forget.

**Suggestions for revising manuscripts in response to referee**

**comments.**

Matt Ayres, 29 Aug 2006 (13 Jan 2008)

Revising manuscripts in response to referee critiques is an important part of the process that seldom gets taught. As an editor, I have seen numerous cases of poor tactics, weak arguments, and inexpicable stubbornness, even from experienced scientists. Following are a few general suggestions.

My general suggestions for ms revisions are as follows:

* Whenever possible, respond with "agreed" and just do it. Editors like to see that.
* On the other hand, one does not want to change the paper too much, and one does not want to accept changes that unnecessarily cripple the message of the paper. When we need to hold our ground on something, there is generally not much point in making arguments within the letter to the editor because no one except the editor will ever read it. It is always best to try to do something to the ms so that that reviewer and others of like mind will be happier when they read the revised ms.
* Ideally, we respond by making a modest adjustment to the ms, and just paste that into the appropriate point in the response letter. We want to make it easy for the editor to conclude that we have been reasonable and responsive . (Remember that the reviewers will undoubtedly read the published paper later, and perhaps will see your letter of response during the next stage of review.)
* Start with the easy criticisms and work toward the harder ones.
* Similar critiques that show up in two or more reviews inevitably require substantive changes.
* In your letter of responses, substance, tone, and style all matter.
* At the first reading of reviews critiquing my work, I am inevitably disappointed at the intellectual acumen of the reviewers, but every paper I have been involved in was improved by the reviews and revisions. I have a personal rule that I set aside troubling reviews for a couple weeks before trying to respond.
* Use your coauthors to help decide which battles are and are not worth fighting.

   Schulz

# Response document Style 1: table-style

Comments by associate Editor

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| # | Comment | Response |
| 1. | Your paper clearly reports interesting empirical results from a good case study but on balance it would benefit from some strengthening of discussion on governance. You could look at some of the references below and their lists of references to tie your manuscript better to the literature on environmental / biodiversity governance in CEE countries. While the referees do make a number of other comments which you should respond to, the governance literature linkage is the key issue to address and decided between minor vs. major revisions. | Thank you! This was a very valuable comment. We now focus and embed our study much more in the larger context of biodiversity conservation and protected area governance in CEE countries. We added the suggested references and other related publications. Please refer for more detailed responses on the governance issue to the respective comments below. |

Comments by reviewer 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| # | Comment | Response |
| 1. | Page 4, row 126:These stands are also the most resistant against the wind action. This was shown in Iezer Mts., Romanian Carpathians in a recent paper: *Savulescu, I., Mihai, B. (2011) Geographic information system (GIS) application for windthrow mapping and management in Iezer Mountains, Southern Carpathians. Journal of Forestry Research: online 24.11.2011: 1-10.* | Thank you! We apologize that we were not aware of this publication. It is indeed a very important supplement. We integrated the respective study into our findings. Please refer to comment XX |
| 2. | Page 5, row 160: you may add another reference(s) about the use of Landsat TM and ETM+ imagery in Romanian Carpathians, in two mountain regions:*Mihai, B., Savulescu, I.,Sandric, I. (2007) Mountain Research and Development,  27,3, p. 250-258.Mihai B., Savulescu, I., Sandric, I. (2006) Teledetection, 6, 3, p. 215-231.* | Thank you for these suggestions. We included the references as additional examples for Landsat studies in Romania. Please see line XX |
| 3. | Page 5, row 171:Windthrow is one of the effects of these activities. You can easily notice that removing trees from these systems a gap is created and a chain reaction will appear (wind gaps increases in time). | We agree that windthrow creates gaps in old-growth forests. Nevertheless, how far these gaps result in a chain reaction is not clear to us. Why personal observations present certainly some cases where this is true, we are not sure how widespread this pattern is, and did not find published studies that provided quantitative evidence.  |
| 4. | Page 6 Row 192: Figure 1. You wrote about altitudinal ranges (row 193). The map might also provide a legend of the altitude-assigned shades. There are UTM Zones 34 and 35 N, Datum WGS 84. | We appreciate the suggestion, and tried to follow it. However, the small size of the map in the ultimate publication, the amount of information included as well as the continuous color table made it unfeasible from a cartographic point of view. However, we included *zone 35 N* as information. |

# Response document Style 2: paragraph-style

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author

1. The revision addresses all my comments on the previous submission. This is novel and interesting, although its importance is less clear to me. Conservationists must not wait for the hot moment before they decide "where to conserve", so line 180-182 seems overstated. The hot moment is simply too hard to predict.

 *Response: Thank you for these kind words regarding our revision. We agree that conservationists do not have to wait for hot moments before to do anything. In response, we thus qualified our statements as follows: “*Our findings highlight that future efforts to establish protected area need to focus not only on hotspots for conservation, i.e., to help identify *where* conservation efforts should focus, but also on hot moments for conservation, i.e., to help identify *when* to focus conservation efforts.”

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author

2. The manuscript has significantly improved with the modifications introduced by authors. Analyzing the whole global network of protected areas, acknowledging WDPA limitations, improving the justification for using the Gini Index, and expanding the discussion to provide additional evidence and more emphasis of conservation implications, have strengthen the conservation message of the manuscript. The manuscript has improved considerably and I congratulate the authors for that.

 *Response: Thank you so much for your compliments!*

3. Authors might find useful some of the information on global conservation prioritization, WDPA limitations, and the link between global strategies and local actions provided in two of my publications:

• Soutullo, A., M. De Castro & V. Urios. 2008. Linking political and scientifically-derived targets for global biodiversity conservation: implications for the expansion of the global network of protected areas. Diversity & Distributions 14: 604-613.

• Soutullo, A. 2010. Extent of the global network of terrestrial protected areas. Conservation Biology 24(2): 362-363.

 *Response: Thank you for pointing these two references out to us. Both are excellent papers, and we reference them in our revised manuscript. Apologies for not have done so in our original submission!*

Reviewer: 3

Comments to the Author

4. Overall, this is a good paper, and makes a good case for the importance of hot moments. I don't have significant issues that should delay publication, in my opinion, but I do have some minor text suggestions. I also have one suggestion for a simple statistical analysis to make the paper stronger, but I think it is up to the authors to decide if that is worthwhile.

 *Response: Thank for both, your kind words regarding our paper, and your excellent suggestions for changes in the text. In regards to the suggestion for an additional analysis, please see our detailed comment below.*

5. Abstract: Good, although perhaps a bit too aggressive in its choice of language (e.g., "overwhealming"). Typo: change "needto" to "need to".

 *Response: We change ‘overwhelming’ to ‘very strong’. The type ‘needto’ was unfortunately caused by the uploading process on the Conservation Letters website and we failed to catch that.*

6. Introductions: Overall, a very good introduction. I would be a bit more specific about what this paper is doing that is new- there are lots of papers that have looked at the timing of land protection, at least in terms of rates of land protection in different decades and how that relates to different socioeconomic factors. Here, you are focusing on very brief time periods (1-year or 5-year periods) to see if there are indeed hot moments. A very worthwhile thing to do, just make that clear.

 *Response: Good point; we changed the paragraph in the Introduction where we introduce the importance of the timing of conservation actions, to highlight that we were focused on* “brief windows of opportunity, during which conservation efforts are most successful.” (Line 217)

7. Need to broaden discussion of ways to do spatial conservation priorities. There is a lot more out there than hotspots (ecoregions, important bird areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction, etc.).

 *Response: Point well taken. We added the following sentence to the first paragraph of the Discussion:* “Conservation planning has made great strides in identifying spatial conservation priorities, for example, by delineating ecoregions, mapping conservation hotspots, and identifying important bird areas. “ (Line 318)