

The Royal Society of Biology **Research Communications Newsletter**

A collection of online information and opinion pieces.

November 2024

Dear Readers, the newsletter team will be taking a break before returning with the next edition in January 2025. In the meantime, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your readership.

This newsletter provides links to published news articles. Views or opinions presented are those of the original author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Society of Biology.

Royal Society of Biology news

[Hachette Children's partners with RSC, RSB and IOP for new education series](#)

The Royal Society of Biology is delighted to announce a partnership with Hachette Children's Group for a new education series, in conjunction with the Royal Society of Chemistry, and the Institute of Physics. The books are aimed at children age 8+ and will cover the foundations of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics to showcase the wonders of science.

Charlotte Cross, Senior Publications Officer at the RSB, said: "We're thrilled to be able to announce this new partnership and the launch of the Your Expert Guide education series. Each of our authors has been actively involved in building on the RSB's 5-19 biology curriculum framework and has produced content for the series with this at the forefront. It's a fantastic opportunity to reach young audiences and we hope they enjoy learning about the wonders of biology."

Read more about the series [here](#).

[Science in the spotlight: Autumn Budget 2024 and debate in the House of Lords](#)

Science, technology, and innovation have recently been at the heart of the political agenda. The Royal Society of Biology was pleased to provide a briefing for a debate on the contribution of science and technology to the UK economy in the House of Lords, just one day after some of the encouraging announcements in favour of research and development (R&D) in the Autumn Budget 2024.

[Evolution of the RSB's regional network](#)

The Royal Society of Biology has announced a shift in its regional structure following a consultation process earlier this year, aiming to better support local and global engagement in the post-pandemic landscape. As part of its next five-year strategy, launching in January 2025, the RSB will transition to a grants-based model that will allow individual members and diverse groups worldwide to organise life science events in their localities. This change is designed to broaden participation and enhance the delivery of the RSB's strategic goals, while providing more autonomy to regional volunteers.

Opportunities

[British Science Association \(BSA\) Trustee](#)

The BSA is currently looking to recruit for two practising scientists to join its Council; one from

academia and one from industry. More information is available on its website.

Closes 23:59 on Sunday 1 December 2024

[Natural Capital Initiative Summit 2025 - Prioritising wellbeing: evidence needs for action](#)

Wednesday 19 February 2025, 09:00 to 17:00

City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London E16 1ZE

This one-day conference is hosted by the Natural Capital Initiative (NCI), a partnership between the Royal Society of Biology (RSB), James Hutton Institute, and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH). The aim of the NCI is to support decision-making that results in the sustainable management of our natural capital, facilitating cross-sector dialogue between people from academia, policy, business and civil society. The Summit and resulting report will determine what further evidence is needed to help achieve sustainable management of natural capital, with a focus on underpinning several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Book your ticket via the [event page](#).

[Higher Education Bioscience Teacher of the Year Award](#)

Now open for nominations, this award aims to identify the UK's leading bioscience higher education (HE) teachers, recognising the invaluable role they play in educating and inspiring the next generation of biologists. If you know a bioscience lecturer who deserves recognition for their passion and ideas, encourage them to submit an application this year. **Nominations close at 23:59 on 31st January 2025.**

[Royal Society of Biology travel grants](#)

AMRSB and early-career MRSB members of the Royal Society of Biology can now apply for a travel grant of up to £1,000 to support future travel in connection with biological study, teaching or research. Learn new lab and field techniques, gain professional development skills, and network with academics with the support of a travel grant. Visit the [website](#) for further information and to read reports from [previous grant recipients](#). **Applications close at 23:59 on 24th January 2025.**

Spotlight on open access

[Opinion: Green Open Access – Free for Authors But at a Cost for Readers](#)

At its core, open access seeks to make the scholarly literature “free and available to anyone with internet access,” writes Professor Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe in The Scholarly Kitchen, and green open access fulfils this criteria. But green open access has a significant hidden cost: the reader's time.

[Good as gold: will fee-free diamond OA outshine the APC-based model?](#)

Free-to-publish, free-to-read diamond OA may improve equity in publication opportunities, but uptake may be held back as authors are attracted to non-diamond journals with an established reputation, according to The Publication Plan.

Publication policy and debate

[ChatGPT is transforming peer review — how can we use it responsibly?](#)

At major computer-science publication venues, up to 17% of the peer reviews are now written by artificial intelligence. Writing in Nature, Dr James Zhou of Stanford University argues that academic publishing needs guidelines, before things get out of hand.

[New ethical framework to help navigate use of AI in academic research](#)

Researchers from the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, University of Copenhagen, National University of Singapore, and other leading institutions have devised philosophically-grounded ethical guidelines for using Large Language Models in academic writing.

[Cambridge University Press & Assessment writes to 20k authors for AI licensing 'opt-in'](#)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment (CUPA) is contacting 20,000 authors to request their permission before licensing their content for the training and development of large language models (LLMs), reports The Bookseller.

International publishing

[Trump election win stirs scientific anxiety](#)

Within hours of Donald Trump winning the presidency of the United States for the second time, scientists and senior research sector figures began expressing concern over what the next four years could bring, reports Research Professional News, particularly as regards public health and climate policy.

[Opinion: We Need Scientific Brainstorming about Shared Global Dangers](#)

It is difficult to disentangle Russian and Chinese scientists from international science cooperation, writes Princeton University's Professor Frank N. von Hippel in Scientific American. That is a good thing. International scientific cooperation is key to dealing with global problems such as nuclear weapons, pandemics, climate warming and misuses of artificial intelligence. It also creates opportunities for scientists to brainstorm about how we can deal with those problems.

[Opinion: Afrostructuring – Why we need an African future for African research publishing](#)

The emergence of an open access publishing system based on article publication charges has introduced substantial global inequities. The authors of this post on the LSE Impact Blog argue that for African research to have local and global influence requires a focus on 'Afrostructuring', the creation and maintenance of African scholarly publishing infrastructures that derive from and serve the needs of African researchers.

Metrics

[eLife reports submissions shift over Impact Factor loss](#)

Independent non-profit research journal eLife has experienced a shift in its submission patterns after it revealed last month that it would lose its Impact Factor due to a change in its peer review policy, reports Research Professional News. The journal said that between 1st and 15th November, "there has been a substantial fall in the number of submissions from China, where we know there is a strong dependence on the Impact Factor". By contrast, submission trends from elsewhere "are broadly as they were", it said, noting "some countries, such as the UK, have even shown significant increases".

Publication ethics

[Journals with high rates of suspicious papers flagged by science-integrity start-up](#)

Which scientific publishers and journals are worst affected by fraudulent or dubious research papers — and which have done least to clean up their portfolio? A technology start-up founded to help publishers spot potentially problematic papers says that it has some answers, and has shared its early findings with Nature.

[‘Systematic reviews’ that aim to extract broad conclusions from many studies are in peril](#)

Researchers say that fake papers are "poisoning the well" for these gold-standard syntheses, according to Science Magazine.

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