

The golden era of scientific publishing in China

In Chinese culture, the dragon symbolizes faith, strength, courage, and an air of mystery. In 2024, guided by this auspicious emblem and supported by authors, readers, reviewers, and editorial board members, *Zoological Research* (ZR) has successfully completed its annual publishing objectives, achieved significant progress, and secured continued national funding support through its selection for China's Science and Technology Journal Excellence Action Plan (phase II). As we enter the year of the snake, a symbol of wisdom, renewal, transformation, and growth, we take this opportunity to reflect on past achievements and express our sincere appreciation to all contributors.

ZR demonstrated a steady increase in academic influence in 2024. According to the latest Journal Citation Report, its impact factor reached 4.0 (Q1), ranking 4th out of 180 SCI journals in the Zoology category, while also ranking 2nd in the same category based on the Journal Citation Indicator. Additionally, the ZR Scopus CiteScore reached 7.6, placing it 14th and within the top 4% of 490 journals in the Animal Science and Zoology section. The estimated impact factor, based on citations of ZR papers published in 2022–2023, has already surpassed 4.2, further solidifying its leading position in the field of Zoology as we move into 2025.

In 2024, ZR continued to focus on publishing high-impact research within its core topics, showcasing many interesting and impactful studies. For example, several papers on large animal models were published, highlighting their critical role in studies on human disease pathogenesis and therapeutic development (Li & Lai, 2024), as well as the application and advancement of cynomolgus monkeys, rhesus macaques, pigs, and rabbits, emphasizing their essential role in neurodegenerative disease research (Han et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2024). Another notable contribution was the comprehensive review by Yao et al. (2024b), which detailed the progress and challenges of utilizing tree shrew models, which offer unique advantages as alternatives to non-human primates in biomedical research. To spotlight research efforts by Chinese scientists, Hu & Zheng (2024) curated a special column focusing on the mechanisms of pain and the neurobiological basis of addiction and anesthesia. ZR also published several groundbreaking reports and reviews on Alzheimer's disease, offering novel perspectives on its underlying mechanisms and contributing to the fight against this devastating neurodegenerative condition (Cao & Zhang, 2024; Wang et al., 2024c).

Many studies published in 2024 have already attracted

considerable attention and citations, despite their recent release. Among the most highly cited works, many featured advanced multi-omics analyses and microbiota research. For instance, Liu et al. (2024) conducted a sophisticated multi-omics analysis that identified the antiviral potential of alpha-linolenic acid in mitigating fish iridovirus infections, a study that has already been cited multiple times. Wang et al. (2024a) explored microbiota-host interactions through a comprehensive analysis of the gut microbiome and post-translational modifications. Zhao et al. (2024) identified a novel microbiota-gut-brain axis, revealing how chronic sleep deprivation induces cognitive deficits through NLRP3-mediated autophagy dysfunction and tau hyperphosphorylation.

Although listing all highly cited studies is beyond the scope of this editorial, these accomplishments reflect the high quality of recent publications and the rigorous editorial standards of the journal. Despite various challenges, such as the misclassification of letters as articles in the Web of Science database, which artificially lowered the impact factor of ZR (Zhang et al., 2024), the journal has maintained a strong performance. Looking ahead to 2025, the journal remains committed to delivering an exceptional publishing experience, with increasing numbers of authors choosing ZR as the preferred platform for high-impact publications.

The inaugural issue of *Zoological Research: Diversity and Conservation* (ZRDC) was also proudly released on 3 March 2024, coinciding with World Wildlife Day. As a sister journal to ZR, ZRDC is a quarterly, open-access, multidisciplinary international journal that aims to address globally significant questions in biodiversity and conservation science. The mission of ZRDC, as articulated in the editorial for its inaugural issue, is “to publish major advances in theoretical and technical animal diversity research, resolve universally significant and cutting-edge scientific questions, and contribute to the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature and the synergistic development of society and the environment, with the hope that all countries on Earth will move towards a successful and ecologically sustainable future” (Yao et al., 2024a). The inaugural issue of ZRDC featured several notable studies, including important research on mammals (Li et al., 2024b), birds (Wu et al., 2024), and amphibians (Wang et al., 2024b) of the Gaoligong Mountains in China, as well as a comprehensive review of the achievements and challenges of primate conservation in China (Li et al., 2024a). A special issue further explored the profound effects of habitat fragmentation on biodiversity (Ferreira et al., 2024; Palmeirim et al., 2024; Si et al., 2024). These high-quality publications exemplify our determination and confidence in establishing ZRDC as a leading journal in biodiversity and conservation in the near future.

ZR and ZRDC warmly invite proposals for organizing special issues/columns addressing both foundational and emerging scientific questions. Active researchers interested in

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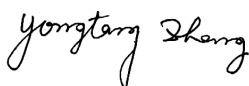
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contributing as guest editors, or those wishing to join the editorial boards of either journal, are encouraged to contact the editorial offices of *ZR* or *ZRDC*. Working together to advance innovative and impactful scientific research remains a priority, and we look forward to fostering meaningful collaborations that contribute to the continued success of *ZR* and *ZRDC*.

In closing, we extend our sincere gratitude for your steadfast, generous, and enduring support throughout a productive 2024. We look forward to your valuable contributions to both *ZR* and *ZRDC* in 2025, and we wish you all a very happy, prosperous, and vibrant year of the snake.



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