

Guidelines for General Ecology Reports

Refer to data in the text.

Before: The relationship between length and width is more of an isometric than allometric. We know this because of our graphs. Rarely, in nature, things fall in a straight line.

Before: Change in weight is not constant relative to change in length. My graphs and equations support this point.

After: Plotting snail length versus width resulted in a r^2 of 0.03 for the isometric relationship (Figure 1) and a r^2 of 0.54 for the allometric relationship (Figure 2). The higher r^2 of the linear (isometric) plot indicates that the relationship of length versus width is isometric.

Have every sentence say something new.

Before: The sample size was so small to gather any relevant information, and we don't know anything about the history of the organisms such as the rate of growth and food availability at different stages of life. There are too many different factors affecting the growth to determine age from the histograms.

After: Unknown factors such as life history, food availability and growth rate make it impossible to determine snail age from the histogram.

Do not be repetitive within a sentence.

Before: ... while the third calculation took into account all previous trap days. The third calculation, which took place on the third day of the study, took into account all three days that the study has been going on.

After: The first two Peterson Lincoln Index calculations use only two days of data while the third uses all previous trap days, making it a more accurate estimate.

Be precise.

Before: Some days have more sample size than others and vice versa. Meaning that populations in a sample may be different if they were captured in different days.

After: Trapping-day one generated a different sample size (n value) than trapping-day three.

Only present relevant information.

Before: Finally, the fourth calculation was made on a whole different day, a whole week later.

After: (It's not necessary to tell the reader when the fourth calculation was made.)

Beware of using scientific jargon inappropriately

Before: But, in our case, the four populations did not have the same estimate because, in the Peterson Lincoln Index that we used for problem part a, b, and c, the populations did not assume birth and death animals (no elimination of death mice).

After: The four calculated population estimates were not the same because the Peterson Lincoln Index used in questions I does not assume deaths or emigration during the trapping period.