

Statement from *Pacific Conservation Biology* on a recent article retraction request

Pacific Conservation Biology is committed to ethical practices in scholarly publishing, and we take seriously any allegations of improper practices. Where an investigation into an alleged breach is required, we follow the publicly available guidelines and recommendations of the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#). *Pacific Conservation Biology* is a member of COPE.

The Editor-In-Chief of *Pacific Conservation Biology* was contacted by an author advising that complaints of plagiarism had been received about their article:

Borrelle, S.B., Koch, J.B., MacKenzie, C.M., Ingeman, K.E., McGill, B.M., Lambert, M.R., Belasen, A.M., Dudney, J., Chang, C.H., Teffer, A.K., and Wu, G.C. (2020). What does it mean to be for a Place? *Pacific Conservation Biology* DOI:[10.1071/PC20015](https://doi.org/10.1071/PC20015)

Pacific Conservation Biology acknowledges the emerging nature of publishing around Indigenous issues in the Journal and is committed to advancing respectful and sensitive contributions to the field.

Borrelle *et al.* is an invited contribution to the special issue ‘Transforming conservation biology through Indigenous Perspectives’ edited by Drs Melissa Price, Kawika Winter and Anne-Marie Jackson. Drs Winter and Jackson are Indigenous scholars. The special issue aspires to build a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems in a way that could lead to better-informed conservation efforts. All other articles in the special issue include Indigenous authors.

The complainant alleged use of content from social media posts published on Twitter and requested that the paper be retracted. As a result of the complaint, a panel of six members

was formed to formally investigate the request following COPE Guidelines. Given the nature of the complaint the panel was chaired by the Editor-in-Chief and was made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars.

The panel concluded unanimously there was no reason to retract the paper. While similar topics and ideas were covered, none of these was unique to the complainant’s tweets. Rather, they were part of the common discourse to be found in many publications in the same area. The panel agreed with the authors that there was value in publishing a [corrigendum](#) in which the authors acknowledged the complainant’s work, which the authors had already agreed to do prior to the panel convening. This is in addition to the [first corrigendum](#) where two authors withdrew from the authorship list.

The special issue editors, two of whom are Indigenous scholars and trained in Indigenous research, noted that the paper was invited to give a non-Indigenous perspective on how to be for a place when one is not of that place. Consultation with Indigenous people was important and did occur, as documented in the acknowledgements of the paper. Indigenous scholars were also involved in the handling and reviewing of the paper.

Commentary on encouraging productive dialogue is welcome in *Pacific Conservation Biology*. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the legitimacy of tweets as scholarship, how dialogue between different voices/interests can be enhanced, and how Indigenous contributions to traditional scholarly outlets may be encouraged. Authors may submit responses to Borrelle *et al.*, new manuscripts on related topics, or short commentary to be considered for News and Views.