

Invertebrate Systematics – new developments

Invertebrate Systematics enjoyed another successful year in 2011, not only by continuing to publish significant contributions but also by implementing several changes that directly benefit authors. In addition to maintaining its broad international readership and authorship, the journal saw a dramatic increase in its impact factor to 2.492 – reflecting the high quality of its content.

Throughout the year, the journal published manuscripts that used a broad array of methodological approaches and described a diverse range of groups, including arachnids (Acari, Araneae and Opiliones), hexapods (Coleoptera, Diptera, Hymenoptera, Plecoptera, Psocodea and Collembola) and crustaceans (Decapoda and Amphipoda). In addition, there were several manuscripts on less well studied groups such as annelids, bryozoans, cnidarians, molluscs, platyhelminths and sponges.

The journal also continued its series of Perspective articles, formerly called Viewpoints, which give authors the freedom to present thought-provoking ideas, develop novel hypotheses, and speculate on controversial topics. In ‘Protecting the innocent: studying short-range endemic taxa enhances conservation outcomes’, Harvey *et al.* (2011) examine the systematics of terrestrial and freshwater groups that have very restricted distributions, and their importance in conservation biology and environmental assessment. In several respects, this paper provides new perspectives on an earlier paper by Harvey (2002a), ‘Short-range endemism among the Australian fauna: some examples from non-marine environments’, which is the journal’s most-read article and the feature paper for the *Invertebrate Systematics* Special Issue on Short-range Endemism in the Australian Biota (Vol. 16, No. 4, 2002). In the second Perspective in 2011, ‘A collaborative, integrated and electronic future for taxonomy’, Norman Johnson (2011) challenges traditional approaches to taxonomy and proposes that the barriers to greater efficiency and throughput in taxonomic projects are primarily social rather than technological, and that increased collaboration among taxonomic specialists can significantly shorten the timeline and add increased rigor. This paper also proposes that taxonomy should fully embrace electronic media and informatics tools, and that this requires the development and widespread implementation of community data standards. Like all Perspectives in the journal, these two articles are freely available online.

Because *Invertebrate Systematics* relies on authors to submit their best work, we made several changes to facilitate this process. We implemented a new manuscript submission and tracking system, ScholarOne, which is widely used in scholarly publishing; in addition to making the submission process easier for authors, we expect the new system to help us reduce handling times and improve our reporting capabilities. Perhaps more importantly for authors, *Invertebrate Systematics* has removed all page charges. As always, the journal provides authors with rigorous and rapid peer review, Open Access options and free colour online and in PDFs.

Just as the journal relies on authors to submit their work, we depend on our expert Editorial Board to handle manuscripts, commission content and promote the journal. Several Editors left the Editorial Board in 2011 as they reached the end of their terms: I would like to thank Greg Edgecombe (The Natural History Museum, London), Heather Proctor (University of Alberta), Greg Rouse (Scripps Institution of Oceanography, California), Nikolaj Scharff (Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen) and Dr Jonathan Waters (University of Otago, New Zealand) for the considerable time and effort they have contributed to the journal. In 2012, I am pleased to welcome three new experts to the Editorial Board: Mark Harvey, Chris Lyal and Nerida Wilson.

Dr Mark Harvey is Senior Curator at the Western Australian Museum, Perth, and an internationally recognised expert on the systematics of arachnids, particularly pseudoscorpions, spiders and schizomids (e.g. Harvey 2002b, 2003, 2007). Mark also has a special interest in the systematics and biodiversity of subterranean invertebrates, and the development of protocols for incorporating short-range endemic taxa into the legislation surrounding the environmental assessment process in Western Australia. He also brings to the Editorial Board more than 20 years experience as a referee and editor, including his experience as an Editorial Advisory Committee member and Chair of *Invertebrate Systematics* and its predecessor, *Invertebrate Taxonomy*, where he implemented several changes including the move to the journal’s current title in 2002.

Dr Chris Lyal has worked at the Natural History Museum in London for just over 40 years, focussing at various times on Heteroptera, parasitic Psocodea and, for most of the time, on the Curculionoidea. His current research areas are the phylogeny and higher classification of the Curculionidae, seed predation in tropical forests, and developing a species catalogue of the superfamily – all 62 000 species of it (fortunately with very active collaborators)! He is also working in the area of digitising legacy taxonomic literature, particularly through the use of XML markup. Chris is the UK National Focal Point for the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Global Taxonomy Initiative, and spent some years working for the Secretariat as Programme Officer for this policy initiative. In the past he has edited *Systematic Entomology*, and is currently on the editorial boards of several journals.

Dr Nerida Wilson has recently joined the Australian Museum as a research scientist after completing a postdoctoral fellowship, and subsequently working as a Project Scientist, at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, California. Nerida’s research interests include the systematics, phylogeny and phylogeography of a range of marine invertebrates, with a special focus on heterobranch molluscs (e.g. Wilson *et al.* 2009). Her current work concentrates on molluscan phylogeny (Smith *et al.* 2011) and Antarctic phylogeography (Hemery *et al.* 2012).

The next year is shaping up to be another good year for *Invertebrate Systematics*. Two special issues are in the pipeline: one covering all aspects of DNA barcoding of

invertebrates, which was initiated as an outcome of the 4th International Barcode of Life Conference held in Adelaide in November 2011; and one on species concepts. In addition, the Perspectives will continue, including an upcoming contribution examining the renaissance that is taking place in comparative morphology due to recent advances in imaging technology.

As *Invertebrate Systematics* embarks on its second quarter century, we look forward to improving and developing the journal even further. On behalf of the Editorial Board and journal team, I welcome your feedback, and hope you enjoy the research and opinions presented over the coming year.

Andy Austin
Editor-in-Chief

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