African Insect Checklist and Bibliographies

Working versions of three products of the biodiversity programme of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) have been installed in new searchable interfaces at NMNH. All are still being developed.

One of the most basic needs for inventorying, exploiting and monitoring the changes in the insect diversity of Africa is a complete list of species that are already known to occur in Africa. Checklist of Insects of Subsaharan Africa <http://entomology.si.edu:591/entomology/Subsahara/index.html> reflects the current state of knowledge in the published literature. A demonstration database is provided for the species of the orders Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies), Ephemeroptera (mayflies), Plecoptera (stoneflies), Megaloptera (alderflies), Hemiptera-Heteroptera (true bugs), Homoptera (cicadas, leafhoppers, planthoppers, and others), and Trichoptera (caddisflies). The taxa are available in a searchable interface (including type localities and references) or as pre-formatted downloadable checklist pages (not including type localities and references).

Afrotropical Entomology: Working Bibliography on Systematics and Ecology <http://entomology.si.edu:591/entomology/AfricaBib/search.html> is a bibliographic database that includes over 7500 citations to papers on the systematics, distribution, and ecology of insects (and related arthropods) of Africa south of the Sahara (including Madagascar and other islands). This is a working compilation derived from multiple sources. It is not yet intended to be comprehensive in coverage of any taxon.

Partial Bibliography of Sampling and Analysis Protocols for Using Terrestrial and Aquatic Arthropods in Biodiversity Studies <http://entomology.si.edu:591/entomology/MethodsBib/search.html> is a bibliographic database that includes over 1100 citations to papers on the use of insects and other terrestrial and freshwater arthropods in biodiversity studies. This is a working compilation derived from multiple sources. It is not intended to be comprehensive in coverage of any taxon or geographic region or subject. Most of the citations include keywords.

Older versions of all three databases remain available on the ICIPE web site at <http://www.icipe.org>. The underlying data are also being incorporated in the ECOPORT database <http://www.ecoport.org>.

GEF Approves Funds for 14 Projects

The governing Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has approved a $153.7 million work program supporting 14 projects ranging from assessing the impact of climate change and reducing shrimp trawling’s environmental damage, to helping China harness wind power and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. With non-GEF co-financing, the total cost of the work program’s portfolio is $461.2 million. Jointly implemented by the United Nations and the World Bank, the GEF is an independent multilateral financial mechanism helping developing countries protect the global environment.

Among the projects approved was a $7.85 million grant to scientifically assess climate change impacts and adaptation options for the most vulnerable developing countries. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has confidently concluded that greenhouse gases produced mainly by the burning of fossil fuels are altering the atmosphere in ways that affect the earth’s climate. The panel warns that warming over the next 100 years could be even higher than their estimate in 1995, raising the temperature in the worst case by 11 degrees Fahrenheit, rather than the 6.3 degrees they predicted five years ago. The project will fund 40 to 50 individual research studies in the most vulnerable countries over the next five years.

Another project approved by the Council aims to halve the amount of fish caught in nets of shrimp trawlers in six
tropical countries—Costa Rica, Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria, Philippines, and Venezuela—and reduce the accidental killing of sea turtles. The project was primarily developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which also will have major responsibility for executing it. Fishing communities and interested non-governmental organizations helped to initiate the project and will remain involved throughout implementation.

The GEF also agreed to help the world’s third largest energy consumer to harness wind power and reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) received approval of a GEF grant of $12 million for a $98 million project. The project supports efforts by the PRC to diversify its energy sources and reduce its dependence on coal, which accounts for nearly 72 percent of total commercial energy production and contributes significantly to the high level of carbon emissions. The GEF project will accelerate the large-scale development and commercialization of wind-powered electricity connected to the public grid.

A fourth project will help protect Sri Lanka’s rich biodiversity while alleviating poverty, a root cause of threats to that biodiversity. Sri Lanka houses more than 3,360 species of flowering plants, 1,920 fungi, 242 butterflies, 78 freshwater fishes, 322 non-migrant birds, and 250 amphibians. Half of Sri Lanka’s species are endemic to the island. The design of this project recognizes that Sri Lanka’s protected areas cannot protect its biodiversity without the cooperation and support of the nearby communities in the stewardship of biological diversity.

CURRENT LITERATURE


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