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Celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity

The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. It is one-year world-wide celebration of biological diversity and its importance for life on Earth. While biodiversity is frequently spoken about in the context of its conservation, no one would argue that protection of biodiversity relies strongly on knowledge of what we must conserve. Nonetheless, traditional taxonomy has often been marginalised among biological sciences by policy- and decision-makers, and left for old-fashioned museum eccentrics. Moreover, few high-profile scholarly journals these days accept long taxonomic revisions unless based on 'cutting edge' DNA sequencing or/and computer-generated phylogenetic trees. *African Invertebrates*, a journal of biodiversity research published by the Council of the Natal Museum, continues to contribute its mite to rejoice taxonomy and to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity with a selection of research articles on molluscs, millipedes, spiders and insects.

The highlight of the current issue is a major revision of southern African cannibal snails by D.G. Herbert and A. Moussalli. Their 132-page, generously illustrated and meticulously referenced article presents the most comrehensive account of morphology, biology and taxonomy of the rhytidid genera *Natalina*, *Afrorhytida* and *Capitina*. The assessment of conservation status of each species and a profound biogeographic analysis of their distribution enhance the theoretical and practical value of the paper, which should difinitely receive a close attention of ecologists and conservation specialists. The article offers a perfect example of how taxonomic papers should be written.

A contribution by T. Wesener, I. Bespalova and P. Sierwald is focussed on the discovery of new species of giant pill-millipedes of the genus *Zoosphaerium* from Madagascar, a well-known biodiversity hotspot. Apart from being spectacular creatures, the giant pill-millipedes are often microendemics of undisturbed habitats and totally absent from anthropogenic landscapes. G.N. Azarkina and D.V. Logunov present new records of spartaeine jumping spiders from the Afrotropical region and describe hitherto unknown sexes of three species. A review of the robber fly genus *Daspletis* by J.G.H. Londt has been prompted by a re-discovery of a remarkable species from the Northern Cape Province of South Africa, but also provides new records of *Daspletis* from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, as well as an updated identification key to all eight species in the genus. A short contribution by C.K. Oppong and co-authors deals with behavioural aspects of the biology of the mopane psyllid *Retroacizzia mopani* studied in the Limpopo Province. The last research paper in the issue by I. Shamshev and P. Grootaert adds two new species to the dipteran genus *Tachydromia* (Hybotidae), one from Ethiopia and

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one from Uganda, and demonstrates a wider distribution of *Tachydromia* in the Afrotropics. The issue is finished off with very appropriate comments by K. Williams on the importance of museum collections, with a particular reference to the Durban Natural Science Museum.

I sincerely hope that the global biodiversity will not be neglected after 2010, and *African Invertebrates* will continue to play its important role in publisizing results of taxonomic endeavours in the Afrotropics.

M. B. Mostovski,
Editor-in-Chief

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