

## ***Amphibia Mundi*: call for contributions**

Alain DUBOIS

Vertébrés: Reptiles & Amphibiens,  
USM 0602 Taxonomie & Collections,  
Département de Systématique & Evolution,  
Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle,  
25 rue Cuvier, 75005 Paris, France  
<dubois@mnhn.fr>

For many research works, as well as for decisions regarding environment, conservation and trade, biologists, conservationists and administrators need updated lists of taxa. As the taxonomy of the living organisms of our planet is constantly changing and improving, it is often difficult for non-specialists to find adequate information in this field, hence the usefulness of comprehensive checklists and catalogues giving lists of taxa and references to major works dealing with these taxa. Nowadays, an easy and quick way to obtain this information, although sometimes incomplete or partly inaccurate, is through internet sites. However, because of their lack of permanence, such sites cannot be reliable scientific references (DUBOIS, 2003), and it is necessary to have paper publications which can be permanently consulted and quoted. Because of the continuous changes in taxonomies, such published lists must be regularly updated through “additions” or “supplements”, or through new, entirely revised, editions. Starting with its next volume, the journal *Alytes* will publish such additions and updated lists for all groups of amphibians.

Printed lists of world recent amphibians have been numerous since the beginnings of zoology. Today, beside the *Zoological Record*, four basic publications provide most of the information needed to find the state of the art in recent amphibian taxonomy, with key references to most of the relevant literature. Despite its shortcomings (DUBOIS, 1987) and until 31 May 1984, FROST's (1985) checklist is the cornerstone in this respect, but it should not be used alone. For subspecies and synonyms, most of which are ignored in this list, information until 1 January 1970 can be found in GORHAM (1974), but after that date all volumes of the *Zoological Record* should be consulted, which is quite heavy. DUELLMAN (1993) provided an update of new taxa and taxonomic changes published between 1 June 1984 and 31 December 1992, and GLAW et al. (1998) compiled a list of new taxa (but not taxonomic changes) published from 31 December 1992 to 31 December 1997. After that year, the *Zoological Record* must be consulted.

The situation is less good concerning fossil amphibians. For two groups only, recent checklists are available: anurans (SANCHÍZ, 1998) and lepospondyls (CARROLL et al., 1998). For urodeles and cecilians, a rather recent work is available (ESTES, 1981). For all other all-fossil groups usually referred to the amphibians, and listed in the *Zoological Record* as labyrinthodonts, information must be sought in the latter yearly publication, as well as in various other sources (KUHN, 1933, 1938, 1960, 1965, 1967; HAUBOLD, 1971; BENTON, 1993).

It is our aim to provide progressively biologists and other users with updated catalogues of all these recent and fossil groups, in a series of fascicles called *Amphibia Mundi* that will be regularly published as part of the journal *Alytes*. These contributions will be of two kinds.

(1) *Taxonomic novelties*. These will simply provide checklists of *new taxa* and *new nomina* of amphibians published during a given period. These lists however will not include other pieces of information that would be necessary to have an updated knowledge of the taxonomy of any given group, such as new synonyms, changes in taxonomic rank or in higher taxonomic allocation, nomenclatural acts (subsequent designations of type-species or type-specimens, first-reviser action choosing between competing nomina or spellings, etc.).

(2) *Taxonomic catalogues*. In parallel with the publication of the checklists of novelties, *Alytes* will regularly publish more detailed and comprehensive catalogues providing the state of the art of taxonomy of amphibian taxa or faunas. The units used for such catalogues will be either taxonomic (family, subfamily, tribe, genus, etc.) or geographic (country, island, continent, zoogeographical region, etc.). A standard format will be used to present the information given for all nomina (both valid ones and synonyms): complete reference (and exact date of publication if available); name-bearing type and its mode of designation; type-locality and its coordinates (for species and subspecies); known distribution of taxon (list of geographic units of known occurrence); major references to literature and iconography; comments. The nomenclature of zoological taxa is currently regulated by the fourth edition of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (ANONYMOUS, 1999), which has force of law for all zoologists and editors of zoological publications worldwide. Whatever our opinion on some of the Rules of this *Code*, *Amphibia Mundi* will strictly follow these Rules to establish the valid nomen of any taxon. This means that, whenever published works ignored some of these Rules, the correct nomenclature will be re-established in *Amphibia Mundi*, with appropriate comments.

The first issue of *Amphibia Mundi* will include a first checklist of taxonomic novelties, prepared by Ronald I. Crombie, Alain Dubois and Frank Glaw, and covering the period 1998-2002, as well as an example of taxonomic catalogue. Several such catalogues are currently being prepared, but they will be published only when all the needed information is available, a goal which in some cases is not easy to reach because of the difficulties in obtaining some publications or some data.

From now on, we are calling for the contribution of all interested colleagues worldwide to join us for this endeavour. Colleagues can contribute to *Amphibia Mundi* in two different and complementary ways: (1) by sending us reprints, photocopies or electronic copies of their publications presenting new taxa or nomina of Amphibia, or new taxonomic, nomenclatural or distributional information concerning amphibian taxa: this will ensure that we do not ignore these works in our checklists and catalogues; additionally, information on the exact publication date of each work (i.e., date of its public distribution), when available, will be most welcome; (2) by proposing to prepare, or contribute to prepare, given catalogues of amphibian taxa or faunas: we will then provide these colleagues with detailed information on the format that should be followed. For both kinds of contributions, you are welcome to contact the address above.

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