



Biota Neotropica: twenty years supporting biodiversity science

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Building everyday science comprises a complex and entangled process that relies on multiples processes. It involves training, funding, manage experiments, tests and re-tests, readings, presentations, discussions, incorporate reviews, and finally, submit and publish the results of the research. The latter one is a very sensitive and important phase of the research because it is not always easy to deal with criticism and rejection. It is not an easy procedure at all.

Scientific publication registers the advance achieved and will support new studies in the future. This is why to choose the right journal is a strategic decision not just to be read, but to give visibility to the research carried out and have the opportunity to discuss it with pairs, and to interact with the specialized scientific community. The best reward is to see your results being cited and used by other researchers to advance the state of knowledge in your field of research.

Concerned with the low number of journals focused on Neotropical biodiversity, and that none of them was open access, the BIOTA/FAPESP Program, launched in 2001 the **Biota Neotropica**, an open access peer reviewed electronic journal (Joly et al 2010). The BIOTA/FAPESP Program was created in 1999 with the mission of understanding biodiversity, ranging from characterization to ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services, and to support its conservation and sustainable use. In the early 2000's, a dozen of big thematic projects made herculean efforts on the production of inventories, thematic and taxonomic reviews, as well as identification keys. But, there were no journals prepared to publish "crude" taxonomic information, so essential for biodiversity science.

Therefore, **Biota Neotropica** was built upon publishing the results of original research, not only generated by the projects of the BIOTA/FAPESP Program, but covering the Neotropical region as a whole. Since it was launched the following categories of papers were established: articles, thematic or taxonomic reviews, identification keys, short communications and points of view, a forum for discussion of controversial/polemic questions.

From the beginning, the journal was designed to be online and open source, which means fully available for reading online and to download the full paper without any charge. At the time this was

absolutely pioneer in Brazil, and reinforced one of the main objectives of the BIOTA/FAPESP Program, i.e. free access to all biodiversity information generated by the research projects within the Program, including the Environmental Information System/SinBiota with georeferenced information about species occurrence and distribution. This innovative approach made **Biota Neotropica** not just another journal, but a great contribution to biodiversity scientists and for the advance of Biodiversity Science.

Since the start **Biota Neotropica** adopted a strict editorial policy, using the double-blind system, and the experience of the leading researchers of thematic projects being developed under the umbrella of the BIOTA/FAPESP Program. In 2001 only one number was published, but with its increasing recognition the journal started to attract papers from all over the Neotropical Region, and currently it is published quarterly and on average each number has 20 papers.

After twenty volumes, 67 issues, 1,643 papers and around 70,000 citations¹, **Biota Neotropica** has become a reference as a Latin American Journal. In the last five years the Journal Impactor Factor has grown over 94% becoming the highest impact factor among Brazilian journals in the area of biodiversity (<https://www.scijournal.org/>). Currently it is indexed by ISI/Web of Science, and is part of the SciELO - Biodiversity Heritage Library collection.

Surely the group of 80 research, sitting in the Auditorium of FAPESP on April 8th, 1996, to discuss the need for Research Program encompassing the large spectrum covered by the thematic "characterization, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity" (Joly 2001), could not imagine the success of the BIOTA/FAPESP Program created on the 25th of March 1999. Let alone the importance of journal they decided to launch 2 years later.

Finally, the continuous support of FAPESP was crucial to provide regular publication without any interruption, a fundamental requisite for indexation.

The photo used in the cover of the commemorative edition of **Biota Neotropica**, volume 20 number 1, was selected from the thematic review Small-sized fish: the largest and most threatened portion of the

¹ <https://analytics.scielo.org/?journal=1676-0603&collection=scl>

megadiverse neotropical freshwater fish fauna Castro, R.M.C. & Polaz, C.N.M. 2020, and it is a tribute to Prof. Ricardo Macedo Corrêa e Castro from the Faculdade de Filosofia Ciências e Letras de Ribeirão Preto/USP, who was engaged in the BIOTA Program since its planning in 1996 and a member of the first Editorial Commission of **Biota Neotropica**.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to manuscript preparation.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

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