
Editorial

In view of the increasing importance of biodiversity nowadays there has been a great demand for data at the species level. Special programs designed to document and to make available the best and most useful scientific information on the topic have to rely on taxonomists and museum scientists who are able to provide accurate information. In spite of the attitude of some scientists who look at species listings with suspicion, the recognition that recording with precision how many and where the species are found represent a very important step toward the knowledge of biodiversity. When the BIOTA/FAPESP PROGRAM was planned, more than 10 years ago, a general consensus was reached by the scientific community assembled to organize the program that one of the most important aspects of recording the necessary data in the field, regardless of the scientific project to be developed, would be through a standard record sheet so that meaningful comparisons could be achieved. This procedure allowed, for example, the publication of a book containing the basic information for conservation and restoration of the biodiversity in the São Paulo state, supported by the São Paulo state government through the Secretary of the Environment and FAPESP. It was only because broad spatial and specific databases were available that the results so much needed for government decisions were properly evaluated.

The checklists of the taxonomic groups found in the São Paulo state published in this special issue of *Biota Neotropica* to celebrate the Biodiversity International Year are essentially based on the same principles. They certainly represent a very important contribution and will play a prominent role guiding conservation and restoration activities of government and scientific institutions as well as the sustainable use of biodiversity that will greatly benefit the society as a whole.

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