

Descriptive Taxonomy: The Foundation of Biodiversity Research (Systematics Association Special Volume Series)

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In an age when biodiversity is being lost at an unprecedented rate, it is vital that floristic and faunistic information is up to date, reliable and easily accessible for the formulation of effective conservation strategies. Electronic data management and communication are transforming descriptive taxonomy radically, enhancing both the collection and dissemination of crucial data on biodiversity. This volume is written by scientists at the forefront of current developments of floras and faunas, along with specialists from applied user groups. The chapters review novel methods of research, development and dissemination, which aim to maximise the relevance and impact of data. Regional case studies are used to illustrate the outputs and impacts of taxonomic research. Integrated approaches are presented which have the capacity to accelerate the production of floras and faunas and to better serve the needs of a widening audience.

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Editorial Review

Review
"An informative collection of emerging issues and cutting-edge technology in taxonomy and biodiversity assessment ... With contributions from 47 biodiversity and taxonomy experts in the UK (plus the US and Ireland), the book describes the challenges related to communicating taxonomy to a wider audience (e.g., through digital field guides); guiding the increased use of genetic information in both taxonomy and conservation; and identifying taxonomic trends impacting biodiversity assessment and conservation. Clearly the gap between taxonomists and conservationists can be closed through the movement toward digitization, online access to collections and checklists, and open access and Creative Commons copyright practices ... This book will be particularly beneficial for researchers who develop or use assessment or monitoring tools." A. L. Mayer, Choice

About the Author
Mark Watson is Head of the Major Floras research programme at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), where he leads the Flora of Nepal team. He is a taxonomic botanist and expert in floristic research in the Sino-Himalayan region, with over 23 years' experience at RBGE in floristics, fieldwork and biodiversity informatics.

Chris Lyal is a researcher at the Natural History Museum in London, with over 40 years' experience in insect taxonomy, including fieldwork in many countries. He has worked on the digitisation of taxonomic literature to address the 'taxonomic impediment' - the shortage of taxonomists and taxonomic tools that hinders work in other areas of biodiversity research and management.

Colin Pendry is an editor for the Flora of Nepal based at RBGE. His background is in ecology, and for the last 20 years he has worked as a plant taxonomist. He has extensive experience of fieldwork in the UK, South East Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Nepal and is at the forefront of developments in RBGE's fieldwork methods.

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