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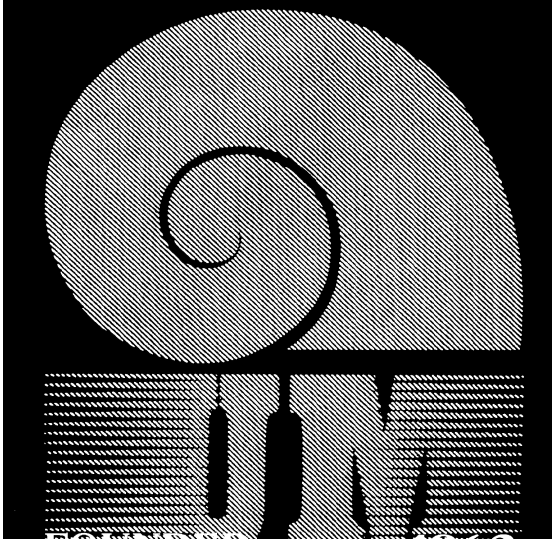
UNITAS MALACOLOGICA



Newsletter

Number 20 December 2003

keeping the world of malacology informed

Affiliated Organisations

American Malacological Society
Asociación Malacológica Argentina
Comite para los Congresos Latinoamericanos de Malacologia
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Société Française de Malacologie
Society for Experimental and Descriptive Malacology
The Malacological Society of Japan
The Malacological Society of London
The Western Society of Malacologists

Our aim is to further the study of Mollusca by individuals, societies and institutions world-wide

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Editorial

Dear UNITAS members,

First of all I send you my greetings for coming Christmas and the year 2004.

This will be the last newsletter, which I am editing. Due to some reasons, not connected with UNITAS activities, I asked for retirement from the post. The new editor is still not appointed, but I hope that Council will find an appropriate person. From my side I promise cooperation and any possible assistance to the future editor.

Unfortunately the current issues of the Newsletter are still not available on the net due to some technical problems (mostly from my side), but I hope we will resolve them with Tom Meijer soon.

With only few months before the coming Congress, it is not surprising that this newsletter is mainly dedicated to it.

The reports of the students who received the UNITAS research awards (Laurence Kiss and Purba Pal) are also in this issue.

Yuri Kantor
kantor@malaco-sevin.msk.ru

Secretary's column

On September 21st I spent an enjoyable day in Brussels attending this year's UM Council Meeting, kindly hosted by Jackie Van Goethem. The discussion naturally centred on the forthcoming World Congress in Perth. Fred Wells has been extremely busy with the preparations, and the brochure for the meeting accompanies this newsletter. It promises to be every bit as good as previous Congresses!

There was also good news on the financial front. As our Treasurer explains in his report, the finances of UM are in a particularly healthy state at the moment. Consequently, Council took the decision to increase the amount of money available for Student Travel Grants for Perth, and also to offer two Research Awards in 2004, and annually thereafter – previously only a single award has been offered in each of the two years between Congresses. We will now award 25 Travel Grants of up to €800 (€400 for those resident in Australia) – the deadline for submissions is 29th February, 2004. The Research Awards are each of a value up to €1000, and the deadline for receipt of applications for these is 30th April 2004. Full details of the conditions relating to both the Travel Grants and Research Awards follow this report.

Congratulations to Gregorio Bigatti, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, who has been given the 2003 Research Award for his project entitled 'Reproduction and diet of the zigzag volutid *Odontocymbiola magellanica* (Gmelin, 1791) from Patagonia'. The reports of two previous Award winners, Laurence Kiss and Purba Pal, appear elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Peter Mordan

Travel Grants

Travel Grants are designed to help enable students of malacology to attend the World Congress of Malacology. The maximum amount of any award will be €800 (€400 for those resident in Australia).

Anyone actively involved in the study of molluscs is eligible, whether amateur or professional. Preference will, however, be given to postgraduate students and malacologists who do not have access to significant alternative funding. A major aim is to encourage wider representation at congresses of students of malacology from areas such as Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe. Applicants *must* be a member of Unitas Malacologica or of an affiliated organisation.

Eligibility will be judged on the basis of *merit* and *need* by the Council of UM. All successful applicants must present either a paper or a poster. It is expected that applicants will provide between one-quarter and one-half of their travel costs from other sources.

In addition to the completed form, applicants must send a half-page summary of the proposed presentation or poster, and a supporting letter from a referee outlining the qualities of the applicant and their work.

An application form is included in the Congress brochure, accompanying this Newsletter; an electronic form can be obtained from the Secretary (pbm@nhm.ac.uk). The completed form, supporting letter and summary should be sent to the Secretary. **The closing date is 29th February 2004.**

UM Student Research Awards

Two awards, each of up to €1000, are offered every year to students in the pursuit of the study of malacology. These will normally involve research projects in conjunction with higher academic degrees such as masters or doctorates. Normal budget items include supplies, expendable equipment and research travel. The awards cannot be used to cover salaries, institutional overheads, permanent equipment or conferences. There is no official application form. Applications must not exceed six pages, and should include: (1) title of project, (2) summary of project not exceeding 150 words, (3) the body of the proposal including background information necessary to understand the project and its significance, materials and methods, and proposed plan of research, (4) itemised budget of estimated expenses, (5) literature cited, and (6) one-page résumé including address, etc. Applications from students who are not members of UM or an Affiliated Organisation will be accepted, but must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation by a nominator who is**.**

The next deadline for submissions is 30th April 2004. Applications should be sent, preferably as an e-mail attachment, to the Secretary:

Dr Peter Mordan,
Secretary, Unitas Malacologica,
Department of Zoology,
The Natural History Museum,
Cromwell Road,
London SW7 5BD, UK

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7942 5210
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e-mail: pbm@nhm.ac.uk

President's Message

An overview of the 2004 World Congress

Dear Colleagues

After two years of behind the scenes planning, the World Congress of Malacology, Perth, Western Australia 2004, is just around the corner. All of the major components to the Congress are now in place, and registrations are being received. The purpose of this article is to point out the highlights of the Congress to you.

Registrations are now open at http://www.congresswest.com.au/malacology. This is a commercial site and allows you to register directly with the conference organiser. It contains all of the information available at present, but will NOT be updated because of the cost. Instead, new information will be available at the Unitas website http://www.inter.nl.net/users/Meijer.T/UM/um/html and on the Malacological Society of Australasia website http://www.amonline.net.au/malsoc. We plan to compile an e-mail list of registrants and sent information to you as you register.

Unitas Council made a key decision during its recent meeting in Brussels. The organising committee of the 2001 Vienna Congress, headed by Prof Dr Luitfried Salvini-Plawen, presented Unitas with a cheque for € 12,000, the surplus from the 2001 Congress. Because of the distance to Perth and the travel expenses involved, Council decided to substantially increase the amount of travel funds available to our student participants and young professionals who would not otherwise be able to attend the Perth Congress. A total of up to 25 grants of up to € 800 each will be available to assist these members to participate. An application form is included with the registration package. Please note the eligi-

bility requirements and the deadline of 29 February 2004 for applications to be received.

An exciting program of science is planned for the Perth World Congress. As one would expect at such a Congress on molluscs, the objective is to be inclusive. Papers are welcome on all aspects of molluscs: fossil and Recent, from all of the classes and all habitats, marine, freshwater, and terrestrial, applied and theoretical research, and any other aspect you can think of can be accommodated in the program. Both verbal papers and posters are welcome. A large number of people have volunteered to draw together various themes into major and smaller symposia. These include:

- **Phylogeny of Molluscs**
- **Molluscan Fisheries and Aquaculture**
- **Ecology of Molluscs**
- **Medical and Applied Molluscs**
- **Bivalves**
- **Reproduction and Development Patterns in Molluscs**
- **Biology and Systematics of Opisthobranch Molluscs**
- **Population Genetics in the Mollusca**
- **Patterns and Progress in Land Mollusc Diversity**

If sufficient people are interested, we will also have a Curator's meeting.

The conference will start with an icebreaker at the Western Australian Museum at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, 11 July. Most of you will probably be staying at Trinity College of the University of Western Australia. Buses will be available at 4:00 p.m. to take you to and from the Museum. It is only a 15 minute ride, but the early departure will allow you to register for the Congress before the icebreaker. The icebreaker is included in the registration, but please indicate whether you'll be attending for catering purposes. After the icebreaker you can take a bus back to Trinity College, or stay in the Northbridge area near the Museum for dinner. Northbridge is the centre of Perth nightlife, and there are plenty of excellent places to eat with a variety of price ranges.

The wide variety of topics available in the symposia and contributed papers mean that there should be plenty of papers of interest to everyone. Present plans are for the first day (Monday) to include a formal opening of the Congress and a day of plenary talks to introduce the molluscs of Western Australia and the various symposia.
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday will be days of presented papers. At this stage we plan to have three concurrent sessions, and will do our best to minimize conflicts between the sessions. The number of concurrent sessions can be increased or decreased as needed depending on the number of papers being presented.

Coffee/tea breaks will be a half hour to allow you the opportunity to discuss molluscs with colleagues without being unduly rushed by the imminent start of the next session. Lunches, which are included in the registration fee, will be in the student guild, a few minutes walk from the lecture theatres. The hour break will allow you to have a leisurely lunch. Posters will be in the same room, so you will be able to examine them during the various lunch breaks. We will also have a dedicated poster session where the presenters will be available to discuss their posters with you.

Wednesday, 14 July, will be a tour day, with four options to attract you and let you see part of the Perth region. Additional fees apply to all of the day trips (see the registration brochure for details). Two full day tours will be available. A ferry trip will be available to Rottnest Island. The ferry leaves from Barrack Street Jetty in Perth and spends 45 minutes or so going down the Swan River, the heart of Perth. Then a half hour ride across the open ocean delivers you to Rottnest Island. On the island you will have a two hour bus tour where the sights will be pointed out to you. Then you'll have lunch at the Rottnest Lodge and free time in the afternoon before the boat leaves to return you to Perth. Please remember that Rottnest is an A Class reserve and no collecting is allowed on the island.

For the more adventurous, the Perth Diving Academy has organised a dive trip to Rottnest. The trip includes the bus to the Perth Diving Academy base at Rous head, rental of dive gear, coffee/tea, and lunch on board. You will go across to Rottnest and have two dives to explore the marine world of Western Australia. The dives will be outside the reserve, so you can collect. Please be sure to see me about the requirements for exporting any material you collect. This trip is not to be missed for divers. It returns to Rous head in late afternoon, and a bus will take you back to Trinity College**.**

In recent decades, Western Australia has become justly famous for its wines. The State accounts for only 2% of the total Australian production, but produces ten times as much (20%) of the premium Australian wines. The Swan Valley, near Perth, is where vineyards were first planted in Western Australia, and where many major vineyards are still based. An afternoon tour takes you to three vineyards and the Margaret River Chocolate Factory. For wine lovers, this is a MUST trip, and a chance to see what Western Australia has to offer.
Alternatively, the other afternoon trip, Koalas, Kangaroos and Sharks, takes you to the Aquarium of Western Australia (AQWA) where you can see firsthand some of the vast diversity of marine life in the State. It also goes to the Caversham Wildlife Park where you will see kangaroos, koalas, wombats, emus and a selection of our brightly coloured parrots.

The conference dinner will be held on Friday night, 16 July at the Burswood on Swan. Again, the costs are included in registrations, but you must let us know that you will be attending for catering purposes. Buses will leave from Trinity College to take you to the dinner and back – it is only a 15 minute trip. The dinner promises to be a fun evening on the banks of the Swan River, with a variety of food and drink available – a chance to relax after the pressures of preparing and giving your paper and the intense conversations about molluscs.

We also hope that you will take advantage of your stay in Perth to see more of Western Australia and other parts of the continent. For this purpose, the conference brochure refers to a number of websites where you can get much more information about places to go and see on this vast continent**.**

We look forward to your being in Perth for the 2004 World Congress of Malacology and to having an interesting and enjoyable Congress with you here!

See you in July!!

Fred Wells
President of UNITAS,
Museum of Natural Science, Western Australian Museum, Perth 6000 Western Australia
email: wellsf@museum.wa.gov.au

Post conference field trip

The Houtman Abrolhos Islands are a series of 122 small low-lying islands located off the west coast of Australia, coast approximately 300 km north of Perth. The environment is dominated by coral reefs, but there are also extensive limestone, sand, and algal habitats. The Abrolhos is situated in a fascinating area where there is a mixture of tropical, temperate and Western Australian endemic species. Nearly 500 species of marine molluscs are known from the islands, and there are no doubt many more to be recorded.
Provisional agreement has been reached with the Western Australian Department of Fisheries to hold a post conference field trip at their newly opened (May 2003) field station at Rat Island in the Easter Group of the Abrolhos. The trip will be 5-7 days long, and will include travelling by road to Geraldton, then by boat or air to the Abrolhos. Diving, snorkelling and intertidal reef walking will be undertaken in the islands, some of which have spectacular underwater scenery and large fish. Museum and Fisheries staff will run the camp and boats, and have an intimate knowledge of the Abrolhos. Collecting and export permits will be arranged by the Western Australian Museum. The trip will depart from Perth on Monday, 19 July 2004 and return the following Sunday or Monday.

Spaces are limited to an absolute maximum of 20, but the group will preferably be smaller. Full details will be published in the registration announcement for the World Congress, which will be coming out in a few months. The information will be sent to interested participants as soon as it becomes available. If you are interested please e-mail me early to ensure you obtain the information quickly.

Fred Wells
Fred.wells@museum.wa.gov.au

From the Treasurer

Dear members,

The most exciting news since my previous column is the receipt of the amount of 12.000 EUR donated by Luitfried von SALVINI-PLAWEN as an excess of balance of the World Malacological Congress in Vienna, 2001. In combination with the overall healthy financial situation of Unitas Malacologica, this additional income enables us to provide further benefits for students and young researchers, such as extra travel grants and research awards. The decisions taken during the last Council meeting will be reported by the Secretary.

We welcome the following new affiliated societies:

- Latvian Malacological Society (2001)
  Contact person: Dr. Mudite RUDZITE
  e-mail: mudite@lanet.lv

- Instituto Português de Malacologia (2003)
  Contact person: Dr. Gonçalo CALADO
  e-mail: bagoncas@mail.telepac.pt

- Malacological Society of the Philippines, Incorporated (2003)
  Contact person: Dr. Ayolani V. DE LARA
  e-mail: avdl@mudspring.uplb.edu.ph

A generous donation has been received from Ruud A. BANK; smaller donations from Robert A.D. CAMERON, Georges B.J. DUSSART, Michael G. HADFIELD, José M. HERNANDEZ OTERO Alan KABAT, The Malacological Society of the Philippines, J. MEYER, Richard E. PETIT, Willy SLEURS, Jesús S. TRONCOSO and from Rolanda ALBUQUERQUE DE MATOS, Leslie J. ELMSLIE, Yves GRUET, Gerhard HASZPRUNAR, Jürgen JUNGBLUTH, Günter SCHMID, Brian J. SMITH, Kenji TORIGOE.

Thanking you very much.

Jackie Van Goethem,
Treasurer of UM

Seeking help!

The treasurer is seeking for the new addresses of several members. Any help would be very much appreciated.

Here are the old addresses:

- Mr Nenad C. BOJAT
Conservation Biology Research Group (NLU)
University of Basel
St. Johanns-Vorstadt 10
CH-4056 BASEL
Switzerland

- Prof. Dr. J. MARIGOMEZ
Scripps Institute of Oceanography
University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
92093 LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA
USA

Dr. K. NAGEL
BAD KROZINGEN
Germany

- Dr. Gitta Solange SCHMITT
3380 # 817 Fred Georgerd
FL-32303 TALLAHASSEE
USA

Reports of UNITAS Awards Winners

"The impact of fire on land snail communities in calcareous Provence (Southern France)"

Laurence Kiss
IMEP, Faculté des sciences et techniques de St Jérôme, Botanique et Ecologie Méditerranéenne, Case 461, Av. Escadrille Normandie-Niemen, 13397 Marseille, FRANCE

Introduction

Fire regularly causes major disturbance within Mediterranean ecosystems in Southern France. Land snails offer a good illustration of this impact, but no study has ever been performed, although numerous papers deal with the subject of the impact of fire on Mediterranean fauna. Living for the most part on vegetation or in litter, snails are directly exposed to fire, and also to destruction of their micro-habitats. Their ability to escape is negligible, their aptitude for active dispersal is generally low and they are very sensitive to the high temperatures reached during a fire. Moreover, land snail communities are highly diverse in Southern France, the number of gastropod species is high, and they are particularly characterised by rare or very micro-habitat-specific species. The aims of this study were: (1) to define the short- and long-term impact of fire on species richness and diversity of land snail communities, (2) to clarify the consequences of successive fires at relatively short intervals (less than 25 years) on malacofaunas, and (3) to reveal the pattern of post-fire recolonisation within these communities.

Materials and Methods

A stratified sampling was carried out according to fire age, fire frequency and post-fire vegetation structure. Twelve sites were selected: six sites have burned once within the past 25 years, though those fires occured at various time, and the other sites have burned two or three time over the same 25-year interval. In the sites which have burned once sampling was carried out at different distances from potential refuges, i.e. near burned/unburned boundaries, near unburned vegetation refuges, in rock outcrops within the burned area, and within different type of vegetation. In the sampling sites which have burned more than once, samples were taken within various vegetation types and at the intersection of various burned areas. Ten samples of 5 x 5 m were taken on each site where floristic variables, environmental variables, and malacological data were recorded. The malacological record consisted of two different samples: snails larger than 5 mm were collected during a standard period of 30 minutes and snails smaller than 5 mm were collected in four 25 x 25 cm squares that included the litter and the top three centimetres of the soil. The data were analysed using Correspondence Analyses (CA), Canonical Correspondence Analyses (CCA) and diversity indexes. Only the number of live individuals and the number of fresh shells, which are representative of current communities, were taken into account in these analyses.

Results and discussion

The short-term impact of fire has induced a drastic reduction in land snail abundance. Considering all species, only 30 live individuals and only 1,236 fresh shells for ten samples were found one year after the fire, whereas pre-fire abundance was estimated at 5,689 individuals. No rare species were lost and only five species were not sampled as recolonising land snails one year after the fire. Moreover, all the ecological groups were found among these recolonising species, i.e. open-habitat species, saxicolous species, scrubland species, and even Mediterranean shade-loving species. Litter-dwelling species and species living in the upper centimetres of soil were predominant.

The long-term impact of fire has little effect on species richness. All the sites showed similar species richness values varying from 22 to 31 species, i.e. 25.3 ± 3.26 species on average. Shannon diversity indexes were low, i.e. 3.62 ± 0.3 on average. However, overall snail abundance seemed to reach equilibrium from the fifth year after the fire. CA showed that post-fire land snail communities did not depend on a fire age gradient, but on post-fire habitat structure. Moreover, a vegetation structure history of sampling sites, based on aerial photographs taken within the past 50 years, showed that post-fire land snail communities were also

linked to pre-fire habitat structure and as well as to pre-fire gastropod communities.

The averages of species richness and diversity indexes for sampling sites which had burned several times were close to the averages for sampling sites which had burned only once (i.e. species richness varying from 23.8 ± 4 species to 25 ± 3 species respectively and Shannon index varying from 3.6 ± 0.4 to 3.2 ± 0.3 respectively). The impact of successive fires was analysed by another CCA. This analysis showed that the communities became more and more composed of open-habitat species when the interval between two fires was less than 10 years. However, number of fires did not seem to affect communities, provided the interval between fires was sufficiently long.

Burned/unburned boundaries, unburned refuges and stony areas seemed to be potential source areas for the recolonisation of land snails. However, the abundance of the recolonising land snails did not decrease with distance from potential sources, whatever the fire age. No general tendencies were observed. CCA constrained by "distance from source" variable showed that distance from potential source was never significant. Moreover, CCA constrained by the estimated fire intensity variable showed that varying fire intensities within a burned area may have provided scattered refuges for land snails from where a recolonisation could be carried out.

Conclusion

Despite a drastic reduction in abundance in the first years after a fire, Mediterranean land snail communities seemed to show a high resilience to fire, if the interval between two successive fires exceed ten years. Patterns of post-fire recolonisation were not really clear; however post-fire land snail communities seemed to depend on the structure of the post-fire and pre-fire habitats, and also on numerous and scattered refuges provided by varying fire intensities.

Structure of egg masses (ribbons) in two sympatric species of *Siphonaria*

Purba Pal

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Siphonariids are marine, intertidal to shallow subtidal pulmonate limpets, which are particularly common in warmer waters of Southern hemisphere. These primitive basommatophorans have mostly been investigated for understanding different aspects of their biology yet there is no knowledge on the larval biology, egg development and egg mass formation. My doctoral research dealt with the reproductive biology especially egg development in two species of *Siphonaria* with different developmental mode. *Siphonaria capensis* is a planktonic developer, which lays egg ribbons, which hatch as swimming veligers after 4-5 days whereas *S. serrata*, an intracapsular developer produces collar shaped egg masses that take 3-4 weeks to hatch as crawling juveniles. Egg ribbons of *Siphonaria capensis* and *Siphonaria serrata* were studied (as a part of my Ph. D. project) to compare their structural and biochemical differences. The structure of the egg ribbons was examined by light, transmission and scanning electron microscopy. The organic content of the egg ribbons was determined by TCA soluble carbohydrate, NaOH soluble protein and total lipid estimation. In both species histochemical tests showed the presence of mucopolysaccharides in the egg ribbon jelly, perivitelline fluid and the developing embryo, and protein in the perivitelline fluid and the developing embryo, whereas lipid was present in the developing embryo only. The egg ribbons of both species consists of (proceeding inwards) an outer mucous cover, a mucous matrix which holds the egg capsules, an inner mucous layer terminating in a mucous strand, egg capsules and the envelope surrounding perivitelline fluid. The structural composition of the egg mass was similar in both species although the spawn of *S. serrata* appeared more fibrous and had a greater amount of carbohydrate and protein than that of *S. capensis*. *S. serrata* which has intracapsular development also produces egg capsules with thicker wall compared to *S. capensis*. It is suggested that it is these differences that make the egg masses of *S. serrata* more robust enabling them to survive on the shore for longer periods.

These findings have been presented at an international meeting (Limpets 2003, Biology and Evolution of Marine Limpets) held in Millport, Scotland (March 2003) and the manuscript, which was submitted to Invertebrate Reproduction and Development for publication, has been accepted. The author wishes to thank Unitas Malacologia for the financial assistance in form of a “Student Research Award”.

News about forthcoming conferences

Russian Far East Malacological Society

under the umbrella of the **Far East Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences** and **Institute of Marine Biology** is holding the **CONFERENCE**

Mollusks of the Northeastern Asia and Northern Pacific: Biodiversity, Ecology, Biogeography and Faunal History

Vladivostok, Russia, October 4-6, 2004

The Conference languages will be both Russian and English.

Registration fee for foreign Russian participants is 2000 rubles (about 66 USD), which include costs of a participant’s file, abstract volume, participation in a field trip and reception dinner. The fee is paid at registration on the first day of the Conference.

We would be pleased if you can contri bute to our meeting, and distribute this announce-ment among your colleagues.

Vladivostok, the largest city and cultural, economic, and scientific capital of the Russian Far East, has about 700 000 inhabitants. The city is located at the Muravyev-Amursky Peninsula, surrounded by two large bays with a rich molluscan fauna. A majority of molluscan specialists work at the institutions of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Far East State University and Pacific Fisheries Research Centre, all at Vladivostok, and the meeting is going to be the biggest malacological event in the science history of the Russian Far East.

If you wish to participate in the Conference, you are to send your filled-in registration form (can be obtained from Dr. Konstantin Lutaenko (lutaenko@mail.primorye.ru) to the address of Organizing Committee before December 31, 2003 by e-mail or Fax. All participants will receive acknowledgement by E-mail within 10-15 days (in case of acknowledgement non-receipt you should send your request again). Together with your filled-in registration form or separately, but not later March 1, 2004, participants are to send abstracts by E-mail as attached file. Abstracts should not exceed 2 pages and be written in English. Format and printing of abstracts are as follows: text should be printed in MS Word, with 25 mm upper, lower, right and left margins, 12 points Times New Roman font, single spaced; abstracts should start with a title, followed by author's full name (for example, Svetlana P. Ivanova or John A. Brown) and institution name (*eg*., Institute of Biology RAS, Moscow 100100, Russia). Lists of references and figures are not admitted (in particular cases, please contact Organizing Committee). E-mail acknowledgement of the abstracts receipt will be sent within 10-15 days.
Rules for posters format and preliminary program will be distributed after abstracts receipt.

Important dates:
Deadline for registration form submission – December 31, 2003

Deadline for reports theses submission – March 1, 2004

Organizing Committee:

V.V. Bogatov, V.L. Kasyanov, A.I. Kafanov, K.A. Lutaenko (Principal Organizer), L.A. Prozorova, V.A. Rakov, O. Ya. Semenikhina (Conference Secretary), A.V. Silina

Organizing Committee address: Institute of Marine Biology FEB RAS, 690041 Vladivostok, Palchevsky St., 17, Russia
Tel.: 7 (4232)311-182, fax 7 (4232) 310-900

E-mail: lutaenko@mail.primorye.ru (for information and registration forms, not abstracts)

oja@mail.primorye.ru (for abstracts and registration forms)

Malacological projects

Checklist of Russian Molluscs

Currently the inventory of the molluscan faunas of different regions of the planet is quickly progressing. Quite naturally, it has started from the best studied faunas (e.g., marine and terrestrial molluscs of Europe and Japan), though gathering information on such immense and obviously insufficiently studied fauna as that of the Indo-Pacific is also under way.

Two somewhat different approaches can be mentioned. One consists in development of a computer-based databases with a free on-line access. The most well-known examples are the Database of Indo-Pacific Marine Molluscs (http://data.acnatsci.org/obis/findmollusc.php; currently containing 66,527 names), the CLEMAM (European Marine Mollusca) Database (http://www.somali.asso.fr/clemam/index.clemam.html) with 17,000 names (3,500 valid), and the *Western Atlantic Gastropod Database* (Malacolog version 3.2.4.) currently including 4870 species.

The other approach is to prepare essentially the same kind of database as a paper-based publication distributed through usual bookselling channels. The examples are numerous and varying in scope and content, and include checklists and catalogues of the Mediterranean (Sabelli B., Gianuzzi-Sabelli R., Bedulli D., 1990-92. Catalogo Annotato dei Molluschi Marini del Mediterraneo. Edizioni Libreria Naturalistica Bolognese. Vol. 1-3: 781 pp.), British (Smith S.M., Heppell D., 1991. Checklist of British Marine Mollusca. *National Museums of Scotland Information Series*, No. 11, 114 p.), and Japanese (Higo S., Callomon P., Gotô Y. 1999. *Catalogue and bibliography of the marine shell-bearing Mollusca of Japan.* Elle Scientific Publications, Osaka, 749 pp.) marine molluscs, as well as of the terrestrial fauna of Europe (France -- Falkner G., Ripken T.E.J., Falkner M., Bouchet P., 2002. Mollusques continentaux de France. Liste de Referece annotee et Biblographie. MNHN - Paris: 1-350; CLECOM), not to mention the others.

The usefulness of these faunal inventories depends, besides other things, on their content, namely on the completeness of the data on the included taxa. Ideally, each taxon should be provided by reference to the original description, synonymy, type material and type locality, distribution, perhaps also measurements, and illustrations. Probably the catalogue of Japanese marine molluscs (including the separately published, though unfortunately incomplete, illustrations of the types) comes closest to this standard. (Higo, Callomon, Gotô, 1999).

In terms of geography, there are still large areas with comparatively well studied faunas and a need for a general inventory of molluscs. Clearly, one of such areas is Russia (or, in a broader sense, the Community of Independent States (republics of the former USSR). It possesses a huge territory and a very long coastal line, and connecting at the same

time the well studied faunas of Europe and Japan together with the North Pacific. Despite more than 230 years of investigations of Russian molluscs (since P.S. Pallas' work of 1771), and the publication of revisions or reviews of many taxonomic and ecological groups, nobody has tried to compile even a complete list of them. In recent years, some regional checklists were, however, published (Northwest Pacific – Golikov et al., 2001; freshwater molluscs of Russian Far East – Prozorova L.A. 1998, and others).

Therefore we [A.V. Sysoev, D.L. Ivanov (both from Zoological Museum of Moscow University), Yu.I. Kantor (A.N. Severtzov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Ac. Sci.)] with the help of colleagues from other Russian Institutions started to compile a catalogue of marine and non-marine molluscs of Russia and adjacent territories. Geographically, it covers the territory of the former USSR, because in the course of development of malacology in Russian Empire and then in the USSR the collections and the types were primarily accumulated in Russia, and now the fauna of Central Asia, for example, can be much more easily reviewed in Moscow than in any of Central Asian republics. In the content of the catalogue we are trying to include as many information as we can, according to the above-described standard. The first draft is already compiled and even allows making some preliminary conclusions.

The fauna of marine molluscs appeared to be rather poor in comparison with adjacent territories. Thus around 1450 species of all six classes were recorded in seas of Russia (besides the Black Sea, which is characterised by low salinity) [186 families, ca. 470 genera]. The fauna of the Black Sea includes 126 species, and that of the Caspian sea – 142 species. For comparison, the fauna of Japan consists of at least 5106 species [T. Okutani (ed.). *Marine Mollusks in Japan*, 2000].

The low diversity of marine molluscs most probably is the result of impoverishment with the shift from tropical and subtropical environment to boreal and arctic ones.

The fauna of fresh-water molluscs appeared to be very diverse, comparing to marine. In total around 1040 species were recorded. Among them are about 640 species of Gastropoda (28 families and 107 genera) and 400 species of Bivalvia (13 families, 64 genera). One of the outstanding waterbodies is the Baikal Lake, where 148 species of gastropods (117 endemic) from 26 genera (15 endemic) and 8 families (2 endemic) were found. The bivalvian fauna of Baikal includes only 31 species (17 endemic).

The high diversity of fresh-water molluscs may reflect not only the vast territory of investigations, but the amount of labour too. Dr. Ya. I. Starobogatov, the leading researcher of fresh-water fauna, has described ca. 400 new species, mostly of freshwater molluscs (not counting the species, described by him in the last decade) [Sysoev A.V., Kantor Yu.I. 1992. Names of Molluscs, introduced by Ya.I.Starobogatov in 1957-1992. *Ruthenica, Russian Malacological Journal*, 2(2):119- 159.]
The land snails are represented by about 700 species from 43 families and 217 genera. As typical of this group, the highest diversity is recorded in low-latitude mountainous areas, like Caucasus and ranges of Central Asia, whereas vast areas of lowland European part and Siberia are rather poor monotonous in molluscan species.

We are planning to finish and publish the first version of the illustrated catalogue of Russian molluscs in the nearest year or two.

Yuri Kantor

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