*Lunz, August 2005*

*Dear Trichopterologist,*

*It is an old principle which should be – but unfortunately is not – self-evident: Never use a key for the identification of specimens outside its geographical range. Is that really so difficult to understand and to remember?*

*During my recent visits to remote countries, I was surprised by the variety of self-made keys for caddis larvae which are used by people for studies on biodiversity and water monitoring. The need for this kind of key is evident, and keys for the adults are meanwhile well advanced, but it is by no means acceptable to use for these regions keys destined for North America or Europe, or to use characters of species or genera from there for keys in other regions. It is remarkable that many of these workers do not know the two volumes on caddis larvae by Georg Ulmer from 1955 and 1957, but I found in a report on the benthos of a river in Jawa (Indonesia) the name Hydropsyche angustipennis, a common European species.*

*The usual reply to an objection is: that the characters of the genera (families, etc.) must be the same everywhere by definition, so that they may be used world-wide. But this is definitely not so.*

*The key for the caseless caddis larvae of the British Isles by Edington & Hildrew (1995) is certainly useful for Britain, but if used only 20 kilometres to the east, i.e. over the channel in France, the larva of Rhyacophila tristis keys out in the family Polycentropodidae because there are no Rhyacophila larvae without gills in Britain.*

*The anterior edge of the frontoclypeus with the prominent notch is certainly a good character to identify a Chimarra larva in Europe (with only one species present), but it is not at all acceptable to use this character in other parts of the world with many unknown larvae of Chimarra, and with a high variability of this character, as may be seen for example in the guide by Cartwright (1997) for Australia.*

*I hope that I am not alone in my opinion that experienced international workers should support their colleagues in remote parts of the world by encouraging an orderly procedure in their scientific work.*

*Many fellow workers are interested in the distribution of species in Europe. The tables from 1978 in "Limnofauna Europaea" by L. Botosaneanu and myself are now outdated, so I carried out a new survey with Peter Barnard, and the results may be found under "faunaeur.org" in internet. When it was published, I was shocked to see that for all countries from which we had no information (where I had left the space open) was written "absent" which means many grave mistakes. I have asked that all these "absent" should be replaced by "no data". Although this is not the best solution, it is an acceptable one, but until today (3 August) the situation remains unchanged, so I feel forced to declare that I am not responsible for these mistakes which were introduced without my knowledge.*

*With best wishes,*