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Authors' choice

Some 10 years ago, as a new member of the Gesellschaft für Biologische Systematik (GfBS), I felt part of a movement for an at least slightly better world for systematists. Observing the raise of the society journal "Organisms, Diversity and Evolution" (ODE) I became impressed by its high citation rates (= impact) – despite the broad spectrum of systematic research featured. Besides impact-pushing phylogenetic and evolutionary studies there was a place for some quality taxonomic studies, including revisions, species descriptions, and comparative morphology. Then, with new printers and with good reason, main bodies of "mere" species descriptions were shifted to electronic supplements, with just an extended abstract surviving in the impact factor zone.

The most recent "new look" of ODE does not welcome purely taxonomic articles anymore. Concentrating on the field of evolutionary systematic research, on models, molecules, case studies and novel methodology, the selection of articles depends on quality and (expected) importance for a supposedly more general audience. Reinforced with an optional (payable) open access, this policy is likely to result in increasing impact factors, and thus is good for authors, the prestige of the Society, and a whole discipline of "evolutionary systematics". On the long run, with the proposed obligation of citing all authors of species names in the References, ODE may pay back some credit to the contributors of centenary taxonomic knowledge.

Decisions are made, taxonomy is said to be more necessary than ever, and taxonomists surviving this and other academic climate changes should look forward – knowing their options and making their choices. Some may want to rethink and have the conditions to supplement their work, e. g. by using genetic markers such as barcodes, to become part of such greater good. But what to do with the bulk of specialized taxonomic products, from short descriptions to large monographs? Is it their fate to remain hidden in dusty cupboards or evenly obscure and hardly accessible journals?

With a little bit of extra-effort towards presenting taxonomic research in a timely manner, and likely some criticism of peers involved, there is now a whole range of new, internet-based journals available. Some like JMBA biodiversity records and Zoosymposia publish faunal and taxonomic articles free of charges. Most of all, Zootaxa is a truly taxonomic success story. Publishing ten thousands of pages each year, authors are guaranteed a fast publication process, online abstracts and a (colour) pdf for personal use at no cost. Due to peer review, high quality standards and quick printing process, Zootaxa got both fame and a reasonable impact factor – that is likely to further increase: the more taxonomists publish and cite in journals that are part of the ISI Web of Knowledge, and the more taxonomic journals modernize and join the ISI system, the higher their overall citation rates ...

Joining the editorial team of SPIXIANA, I am happy to take responsibility for a zoological journal that has a long tradition and is distributed and respected among research museums around the world. Thanks to the work and visions of the former editors, SPIXIANA already is peer-reviewed, already has an open access policy (with pdf's at no cost!), already has a quick publication process, and already is registered in the all mighty ISI web of impact factors. Whatever the resulting impact factor will be (perhaps not even so low?), and whatever the further adaptations towards modern needs and possibilities, I think that SPIXIANA already is among the best choices for zoological taxonomists. I truly hope the community will realize that, and I will do my best to help SPIXIANA to develop without losing its roots. Taxonomy and zoological research in all its facets shall be promoted as attractively and widespread and accessible as possible.

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