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AfroMoths: An online verified searchable and visual taxonomic tool on the diversity, ecology and biogeography of moths from the Afrotropical region

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Currently, the bioinformatics, ecological and molecular phylogenetic studies are strongly hampered by the continuing crisis in taxonomy. The major changes in the diversity of moths occurring in the Afrotropical region remain poorly recorded and lack verified data estimation. The aim of the online searchable website AfroMoths is to produce a visual verified dataset at a finest taxonomic detail. The Afrotropical region hosts highly diverse biotopes which provide key services to humanity. Yet, increasing anthropogenic factors influence and change the landscapes extensively. No major and generalized diversity assessment of the moth fauna has been performed yet in this species-rich biogeographical region. AfroMoths represents the first and unique attempt to assess the extant diversity of Afrotropical moth species and to present the cross-checked and referenced data on their biology and distribution. This online tool targets one of the richest taxonomic groups of insects and combines type voucher based information with specifically targeted research actions. The proposed visual tool based on verified information of 532 family-group names, 7,637 genus-group names and 35,624 species-group names accompanied by images and maps provides a concise and integrated overview of the Afrotropical moth diversity at the present moment. The website is updated regularly. We strongly advocate an integrative approach for the discovery and diagnosis of new taxa in the Afrotropical region, cross-checking multiple evidences and combining multilevel studies in biodiversity search. The information presented in AfroMoths taxonomic dataset is obtained from 4784 references. AfroMoths is mirrored by major global taxonomic data aggregators.

Biography

Jurate De Prins obtained her PhD on Entomology in 1994 and continued her Post doc studies at universities and museums in Russia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, Germany and South Africa. She has been involved in the creation of a scientific collection of Afrotropical moths, especially the primitive ones, and an accompanying information system based on a multidisciplinary approach. She is a scientific Editor of some major taxonomic databanks and organized many expeditions to remote African areas. She was an executive officer of several scientific projects of development organizations in Africa. She is an international expert in Lepidoptera systematics.

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