
EDITORIAL PAGES

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EDITORIAL

Volume 33 of *Metamorphosis* published the same number of articles (16) as Volume 32. All these articles are accessible on our website www.metamorphosis.org.za, or via the website of the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa (LepSoc Africa), www.lepsocafrika.org. The Table of Contents appears as usual on the back cover.

Editorial staff

Our Sub Editor Dr. James Lawrence regrettably had to resign his post early in 2022, principally because of increased family commitments. No replacement has yet been found, and anyone interested should contact me at orachrysops@gmail.com. My latest term as Editor of *Metamorphosis* was to have come to an end in early 2022. LepSoc Africa are pursuing options to find a replacement Editor.

Printed version

Given the complete work overload of the Editor, distribution of Volume 32 was very kindly undertaken by our Chairman.

African Journals Online (AJOL)

AJOL are now regularly publishing *Metamorphosis* articles on their website, as an additional source for particularly African scientists. This includes archives back to Volume 30.

Editorial Board (EB)

The following changes have been made to the EB:

- 1) Term of office is now limited to three years, so that we can regularly bring in new ideas
- 2) Several new EB members were appointed (see inside cover).
- 3) EB members have undertaken to do at least one peer review per year.

Department of Higher Education and Training

The principle reasons for rejection of our 2021 application were that:

- The current Editor has served for over 11 years, and we should aim to limit the Editor's term to four years
- The current Editor does not have an international reputation, and has a low impact rating
- There are too many taxonomic articles, and not enough hypothesis-driven research
- The journal has a low rejection rate compared to other similar journals and some poor articles get published (mostly notes)

Notes

A decision has been made to discontinue Notes, and after Volume 33 these will be published in African Butterfly News.

Indexing

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): Preliminary investigations have shown that *Metamorphosis* is able to satisfy all the requirements for DOAJ, and we should submit an application.

Web of Science: Initially we will apply to join their ESCI (Emerging Sources Citation Index), which will give us more international exposure and the possibility of obtaining an Impact Factor.

Gratitude

We extend grateful acknowledgement to our team of peer reviewers, who have again given of their precious time and expertise to improve and perfect manuscripts. *Metamorphosis* would not exist but for the efforts of our authors, who have again supplied a steady volume of high quality manuscripts, covering all aspects of the study of lepidopterology, for which we are deeply appreciative.

Finally, I would like to wish all those who have an interest in *Metamorphosis* a prosperous, productive and joyous 2023, and encourage you to send in your contributions for publication to myself at orachrysops@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely



Dave Edge
orachrysops@gmail.com

31st December 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

For LepSoc Africa (LSA), the past year has been solid rather than spectacular. Our membership and income continue to show growth, although I believe LSA should be considerably larger than we are at present. We are a society concerned with African butterflies, by which I include all Afrotropical Lepidoptera. This biogeographical region contains the second largest group of butterflies on the planet and includes many of the world's most fascinating and spectacular insects: the potential for growth of LSA is huge. Despite our limited size and influence, we are extremely active; a summary of last years' achievements and ongoing projects is outlined below:

Publications

Metamorphosis

After two unprecedented years, *Metamorphosis* Volume 32 (2021) saw a return to 'normal', with a compilation of the scientific articles and book reviews published online during 2021. Volume 33 (2022) is now complete and is significantly larger than Vol 32, with many excellent articles, already accessible via the *Metamorphosis* or LepSoc Africa websites. Further improvements to the quality of the journal were implemented, such as including ORCID ID's of authors; DOI's (Digital Object Identifiers) for all cited literature, if available; adding the lepidopteran superfamily to all titles; and publishing Notes in a separate section.

Afrotropical Butterflies

Afrotropical Butterflies (ATB), an incredibly useful and comprehensive butterfly information resource, is freely available to LepSoc Africa members via our websites (metamorphosis.org.za or lepsocafrika.org). ATB will provide the material for a new cell phone application, the first module of which will hopefully be released this year. The *Afrotropical Butterflies* checklist was recently adopted by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

African Butterfly News

Our bimonthly newsletter, *African Butterfly News*, celebrated its sixth birthday in July this year. The newsletter keeps our members up to date with all matters related to African Lepidoptera: trip reports and photographs, new scientific papers, taxonomic revisions, and progress reports regarding the various LSA projects.

English Names for African Butterflies

A dedicated team is systematically working towards our overall objective, which is a comprehensive, rational, and unified list of English names for all African butterflies (species and subspecies). We are still two or three years away from this goal, one that has never been achieved within any biogeographical region, including Europe! More than 70% of all African butterfly taxa had no English name prior to commencement of the project.

Research

CRG

The Caterpillar Rearing Group (CRG), managed by Hermann Staudé, is a major long term LSA research project. The number of caterpillar-rearing records obtained to date by Hermann and his enthusiastic team of 'rearers' is extraordinary. Herman has also been very busy with his long-awaited book on the moths of South Africa, which will be published within the next few months.

Aloeides Project

The *Aloeides* Project has progressed about as far as it can with current data, but we are expecting a large batch of DNA sequences shortly. Once received and analysed a detailed phylogenetic arrangement can be produced, splitting the genus into species groups, identifying potential new taxa, and producing a series of comprehensive publications including descriptions of new species, detailed distribution maps, images and identification keys.

Thestor Project

This project commenced in January 2022. All available barcodes from BOLD and GENBANK have been accessed and additional samples have been submitted for DNA sequencing. We hope to make solid progress with this project this season. More samples are needed for some of the rarer taxa.

Spialia Project

This project also commenced this year with the hesperiid genus *Spialia* (which has been recently split into *Spialia*, *Ernstia* and *Agylla*). We are trying to establish the overall relatedness of the various *Spialia* (and similar genera) and at the same time, look out for new species. We will focus primarily on Southern African taxa. LSA's Johan Greyling is to sponsor the cost of sequencing a plate of 95 *Spialia* samples. If there is a group, or genus of African butterflies that you are particularly interested in, why not promote a similar LSA project?

Lepidochrysops Project

Marianne Espeland has been since leading a team of LSA members and molecular geneticists working on the fascinating genera of *Lepidochrysops*, *Orachrysops* and *Euchrysops*, which occur across a large area of southern and east Africa, with representatives in Madagascar. Recent acquisition of a research grant has enabled the project pace to quicken, and Marianne

and her colleague Svenja were in South Africa during October and November photographing specimens and obtaining DNA samples from museum and private collections, after earlier spending several weeks at ABRI.

Gabon Lepidoptera Workshop

A Lepidoptera Workshop, originally planned for November 2020 had to be cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. We are rescheduling the workshop for the fortnight starting Sat 3 Feb and ending Sun 17 Feb 2024. The workshop will include a trip to Ivindo National Park and the Chrystal Mountains; a detailed budget and itinerary will be circulated as soon as possible.

Conservation

COREL (Custodians of Rare and Endangered Lepidoptera) is LepSoc Africa's flagship conservation project. The BBT provides funding to the COREL project, although much of the cost of ongoing monitoring of rare and endangered South African butterflies is borne, voluntarily, by LSA members. Custodians compile annual reports, which Mark Williams assembles into an overall report. The 2022–2023 season has begun well with the rediscovery of Swartland Silver-spotted Copper (*Trimenia wallengrenii wallengrenii*) in December by Clifford Dorse, Biodiversity Manager for the City of Cape Town. This butterfly was listed as Critically Endangered, possibly extinct, so this represents a major find, and spurs us on to find other butterflies close to extinction such as the Waterberg Copper *Erikssonina edgei* and the Brenton Blue *Orachrysops niobe*.

Butterfly Monitoring of National Botanical Gardens

We have now completed two “seasons” of butterfly-monitoring of our National Botanical Gardens (the annual reporting period extends from 01 July to 30 June) and have acquired more than 2 000 records to date. The overall objective of the monitoring project is to establish trends in butterfly abundance in South Africa. Habitat within the gardens is relatively controlled and the various surveys are regular and fairly consistent; if there is an ongoing decline in insect numbers nationally, we will be able to detect this and report in an objective manner. In 2022 we added Pretoria (Hennie Vermaak) and KwaZulu-Natal (Adrian Armstrong and Corrina Naidoo) to the list of gardens being surveyed.

Butterfly Index

In parallel with the Botanical Gardens monitoring, the Butterfly Index is obtaining regular species counts, primarily from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. We now have five years of data from this initiative; no clear patterns have emerged yet, but at least we are keeping ongoing records of butterfly abundance in South Africa.

Partnerships

We are actively investigating partnerships between LepSoc Africa and two other conservation organizations: The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between LSA and SANBI has been signed. A draft MoU has been received from the EWT, and is currently being reviewed by LSA Council.

Interaction among our members and administration

LSA Branches

There has been a dearth of LSA Branch activities for a couple of years, due primarily to COVID restrictions, which are – hopefully – a thing of the past. We are trying to reinstate local branch meetings and field trips. Lourens Erasmus has recently taken over the reins as Highveld Branch Chairman – this includes Gauteng, Free State and North West Provinces.

In memorium

The passing away of Peter Webb last February, a victim of pancreatic cancer, was a huge blow to LepSoc Africa as an organization and to me on a personal level. Peter was always the first to volunteer for a butterfly event in the Gauteng region and his bubbly personality and infectious enthusiasm are sorely missed.

Lepidops and Lepibase

Data collection and assimilation thereof is central to LepSoc Africa's Conservation and Research objectives. Lepibase, developed and managed by Bennie and André Coetzer is becoming increasingly important, with several research projects underway and the need to submit consolidated data submissions to various Provincial Nature Conservation bodies in relation to Research Permits. Technical challenges of making Lepibase an online platform have delayed it becoming the data management vehicle that we would all like. In the meantime, I have volunteered to manage data collection from LSA members. LSA projects which I already supervise, such as Botanical Gardens monitoring, the Butterfly Index and various projects such as *Aloeides* and *Thestor* provide a steady flow of data. Records can be emailed to me directly using Woodhall's *eButterflies RSA* App, and other records can be submitted on a few standard spreadsheets, soon to be made available.



African Butterfly Centre

As you may be aware, LepSoc Africa are trying to set up a butterfly centre, with the primary purpose of creating a storage facility for Lepidoptera specimens (either material bequeathed by our members or from other sources). There are several private collections that have no current succession plan and, in most cases, these collections are not wanted by our national museums. We already have conditional bequests for more than 250 000 specimens, and this number will grow.

We have produced drawings, a budget and a prospectus for a major development at a site belonging to Happy Acre's School near Magaliesburg, part owned by LepSoc Africa's Lynn Katsoulis. While I honestly believe this scheme would become a major tourist attraction, unfortunately it falls short as a viable commercial venture: a considerable benevolent donation is required and, to date, we haven't found a willing benefactor.

In the meantime, André Coetzer has purchased a property near Broederstroom in the Magaliesberg. This property includes an outbuilding of about 200 square metres and André has, very generously, proposed that we use this building as our "museum". Several details are still to be resolved, but we will be starting with renovations shortly. Phase 1 involves upgrading three rooms, which will form a (relatively small) store, a library and an office. This work is being privately funded by LepSoc Africa members: any contributions of money, surplus building materials, advice or recommendations will be gratefully accepted!

Administration

These aspects of LepSoc Africa are being ably handled by our Treasurer, Peter Ward, and our Membership Secretary, Hanna Edge. We intend to issue tax-exemption certificates to donors later this year, with the relevant applications currently being processed (with little urgency) by the Receiver of Revenue! Another achievement during the year was the publication of policies on various topics of interest to the public at large.

Annual General Meeting and Conference

The AGM was held, via Zoom networking only, on Wednesday 14 September. The current Councillors (Justin Bode – Secretary; Peter Ward – Treasurer and myself – Chairman) were re-elected unopposed for a further two year term. Since this will be our last term in office, LepSoc Africa needs to find replacements during the next two years. We are generally not short of ideas: but we need people who are prepared to roll up their sleeves up and get involved!

The Annual Conference was held, as one-day event, on Saturday 17 September, at the Nestlé Centre, Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens, Roodepoort. As for 2021, the conference engaged a mixture of "live" and "virtual" presenters and delegates, and we recorded a good number of attendees. Unfortunately, there were a few technical glitches, but I'm sure we will learn from this experience and host a bigger and better conference in 2023!

To conclude, thanks to you all for your continued support of LepSoc Africa. Our Society has maintained steady growth over the last few years, and we have a current membership list of about of 300; a creditable result in the uncertain times that we find ourselves in. While we are not a large organization, we are an active and important one, and "punch above our weight".

Jeremy Dobson
jchdobson@gmail.com

Chairman – LepSoc Africa

31st December 2022

HONORARY LIFE AND SPONSOR MEMBERS OF LEPSOC AFRICA

Below we list our honorary life members, who have been honoured by the Society for their outstanding contributions to the study and conservation of Lepidoptera.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Jonathan B. Ball
Bennie Coetzer
Stephen C. Collins
T. Colin E. Congdon
David A. Edge
Alan Heath
Graham A. Henning

Stephen G. Henning
Ernest L. Pringle
Clive Quickelberge
Hermann S. Staude
Prof. Emeritus Mark C. Williams
Stephen E. Woodhall

SPONSOR MEMBERS

The members below, apart from their significant contributions to the Society as ordinary members, have chosen to be Sponsor Members for 2022, and have through their generosity provided significant financial support, which is much appreciated by the Society. Any member of the Society can volunteer to become a sponsor member on an annual basis by making a contribution of R1 400 (Africa) or R 1 550 (International). Since the Society needs all the financial support it can get to provide services to members and to fund our projects more persons are encouraged to become Sponsor Members in the future.

Ian Bampton
Dr. Julian Bayliss
Ben Breedlove
Anthony Cambitzis
Kevin Cockburn
Dr. Jeffrey Crocombe
Jeremy C.H. Dobson
Dr. Douwe de Boer
John Douglass
Stephen Georgiadis
Dr. Richard C. Greene
Tim Gilbert
Dr. Johan Greyling
David Horne
Dr. Timm Karisch
Jeremy Kuhn

Dietmar Ley
Dr. Michel Libert
Dr. Duncan MacFadyen
Dr. Dino Martins
Dr. Wolfram Mey
Dr. Jacqueline Miller
Dr. Michael Ochse
Jean-Paul Peroni
Dr. Lorenzo Pizzetti
Jan Praet
Dr. Ian Richardson
Hanna Roland
Peter Sharland
Peter Ward
Ian Waters
Dr. Christian Widmann

Any sponsor members who wish to contribute a larger amount are of course at liberty to do so, and this would be much appreciated.

DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY WILL ASSIST BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Donations to LepSoc Africa are needed more than ever, since we have now committed ourselves to several conservation programmes and projects:

COREL – Custodians of Rare and Endangered Lepidoptera
CRG – Caterpillar Rearing Group
BED – Butterfly Evolutionary Diversity project
APP – *Aloeides* phylogeny project

These programmes are currently being funded through the Brenton Blue Trust (BBT), a registered Public Benefit Organisation, of which LepSoc Africa was a founder member. SARS has given permission for donations made through the BBT (website www.brentonbluetrust.co.za) for butterfly conservation to be eligible for issuing of section 18A tax certificates. Donors are therefore encouraged to make their donations by accessing our website page www.lepsocafrika.org.za and clicking on the “donate” button, or by making an electronic funds transfer to the BBT’s bank account, which is given below:

Brenton Blue Trust

Nedbank a/c no. 2089033681

Branch code 108914

METAMORPHOSIS PEER REVIEWERS

Below we list our peer reviewers for Volume 33, who have given of their expertise and time to assist our authors to produce articles of high quality.

Peer reviewers

Dr. David Agassiz
Dr. Graziano Bassi
Prof. Julian Bayliss
Dr. Thierry Bouyer (2)
Dr. Jurate De Prins (2)
Prof. Phil De Vries
Jeremy Dobson
Dr. Marianne Espeland
Dr. Reinhard Gaedicke
Prof. Alan Gardiner
Alan Heath
Graham Henning
Dr. James M. Lawrence
Dr. David Lees
Dr. Richard Mally
Dr. Silvia Mecenero
Dr. Wolfram Mey (2)
Dr. Rolf Oberprieler
Dr. Fanie Rautenbach
Dr. Ian Richardson
Dr. Szabolcs Sáfíán
Dr. Sergey Sinev
Prof. Alexey Solovjev
Prof. Emeritus Mark C. Williams

Principal affiliation

Natural History Museum, London
Museum d'histoire naturelle de Genève, Switzerland
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Editor (Lepidoptera), Zootaxa, New Zealand
University of New Orleans
Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
Curator (Lepidoptera), Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany
Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany
South African Wildlife College
Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
University of South Africa, Pretoria
Natural History Museum, London
Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Czechoslovakia
University of Cape Town
Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, Germany
Australian National Insect Collection, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, Australia.
Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town
Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
University of Sopron, Hungary
Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg, Russia
Samara State Medical University, Russia
University of Pretoria (retired)



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