



## Describing unexplored biodiversity: *Zootaxa* in the International Year of Biodiversity

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### Abstract

In the International Year of Biodiversity (2010), *Zootaxa* published 1,582 papers (including 92 monographs) in 405 issues, with a total of 32,330 pages. These papers included descriptions of 3,951 new taxa, of which 3,664 are of the species-group, 268 of the genus-group and 19 of the family-group. It is estimated that the total new animal species described in 2010 is most likely to be between 15,000 and 20,000, and *Zootaxa* has thus contributed 18 to 24% of the total.

The United Nations declared 2010 The International Year of Biodiversity, and this was celebrated throughout the world. It was a time to reflect on our achievements in the conservation and management of biodiversity, and to focus on the urgency of our challenge for the future. One of these challenges is the huge task of discovering and describing the 90% of the world's biodiversity that remains unknown to science. Governments of the world, through the Convention on Biological Diversity, have acknowledged the existence of a “taxonomic impediment” to the sound management of biodiversity, and have instituted the “Global Taxonomic Initiative” to remove it. Since the beginning of this century, *Zootaxa* has been helping taxonomists to overcome the taxonomic impediment by enabling them to describe new species in a rapid and efficient way (Zhang 2006a,b, 2008). Here I report on the contribution by *Zootaxa* to the description of new species during the International Year of Biodiversity.

In 2010, *Zootaxa* published 1,582 papers in 405 issues, with a total of 32,330 pages (Table 1). On average, each paper was about 20 pages in length, and each issue contained nearly four papers. During 2010, at least one issue with new taxa was published every day over 50 weeks, except weekends and public holidays. The number of papers increased in 2010 by 6% over that for 2009, whereas the total number of pages increased by 12%. Among the papers, 92 are monographs (at least 60 pages in length), representing a nearly 30% increase over that in 2009 (Table 1), which contributed to the increase of total pages in 2010. The largest monograph is a 1,064-page book by Taeger *et al.* (2010) on sawflies of the world, which provides references to the original descriptions and distributional data for 803 genera, 8,353 species and 161 subspecies. This is the second largest book published in *Zootaxa* (Zhang 2006a). The most prolific author, Prof Ding Yang of China, published 18 papers with co-authors in *Zootaxa* during 2010.

**TABLE 1.** The numbers of *Zootaxa* papers, monographs, issues and pages published in 2009 and 2010. Numbers for earlier years were summarized in Zhang (2008).

	Papers	Monographs	Issues	Pages
2009	1,488	71	360	28,858
2010	1,582	92	405	32,330

*Zootaxa* published a total of 3,951 new taxa in 2010; among them 3,664 are of the species-group, 268 of the genus-group and 19 of the family-group (Table 2). The species-group accounts for 92.7% of the total. The distribu-