

EDNA The world-wide fossil insect catalogue

EDNA aims to catalogue all the known fossil insects that have been named as a fossil (Mitchell 2003). It therefore does not include extant species that have been found in the fossil record. Also recorded is the author and full reference, the taxonomic hierarchy from subfamily to order, the site and formation in which the holotype was found and the geological age. Synonyms are also recorded along with the reference to where the change was noted.

To date (22 March 2007), 23 210 species including 3414 synonyms are recorded from 3917 references. They come from 1485 sites and 1691 families.

Handlirsch's monograph (1906–08), has been taken as a starting place. Assuming, rightly or wrongly, that he had found all the known references, those prior to 1890 have not been checked for accuracy.

Because of translation problems it has sometimes been difficult to find the exact site, formation and geological ages for some species, but this problem is slowly being resolved. There are also some occasions when mention has been made of a new species, which is probably a fossil, but where no reference is given. These species have been added to the database but without other details. On other occasions a reference is given but seems to be incorrect. The correct reference to many of these 'orphan' species is slowly being resolved.

EDNA is recorded in Microsoft Access 2000 so that anyone with the Microsoft Office suite of programmes can use it. There are several basic searches built in, such as listing all species in a particular family, suborder, order etc.; publications or species by a particular author, or species by site, formation or geological time. There is also basic instruction for making tailor-made queries to search for a combination of categories, e.g. Cretaceous Hymenoptera from Australia, and displaying only those pieces of data required. For more detail on the data recorded see Mitchell (2003).

EDNA should soon be completed as far as it is possible and work is in progress to publish the whole database on the web; it will also be available on a CD. The final version could include the facility to add more data and produce site-based species lists. A test version with 16 000 species is currently available on CD.

REFERENCES

- HANDLIRSCH, A. 1906–08. *Die fossilen Insekten und die Phylogenie der rezenten Formen*. Leipzig: Engelmann.
MITCHELL, A.A. 2003. Towards a global fossil insect database. *Acta zoologica cracoviensia* **46** (suppl. – Fossil Insects): 51–57.

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