

Catalogue of type specimens in the South African National Collection of Insects

**I.M. Millar, Agricultural Research Council (South Africa) - PPRI
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The Biosystematics Division of the Agricultural Research Council houses the largest collection of insects in South Africa, formally known as the South African National Collection of Insects (SANC). The emphasis has mainly been on local species of agricultural importance, but specimens from the natural ecosystems are also included. The aim of this project is to generate an annotated list of over 2800 insect primary type specimens housed in (SANC. They include mainly Coleoptera (beetles), Hemiptera (bugs), Diptera (flies), Hymenoptera (bees, wasps) and Thysanoptera (thrips). The project will also involve digitization of key groups and the updating of a type specimen database. Recommendation 72F of article 72 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (1999) states that institutions should publish lists of name-bearing types in their possession or custody. A type list is beneficial to the global research community when revisions of taxa are undertaken and taxonomic problems need to be resolved. Several lists of the type specimens housed in the SANC have previously been published, but they are badly out of date and mostly exclude collection information. Since the publication of past lists, an electronic database has been created for the primary type specimens, and the associated information, that are deposited in the SANC. However, the database is incomplete and is not publicly accessible. This project aims to update and complete the current database of type specimens, and to make the information available in the form of a basic catalogue/inventory which can be accessed through the internet and downloaded as a PDF document. In addition, digital images will be captured for the primary type specimens of the scale insects and mealybugs, which belong to the superfamily Coccoidea of the insect order Hemiptera. These images will be made available on the internet through the Encyclopaedia of Life.