

BFA SEMINAR SERIES NO. 2

DATABASES AND GAZETTEERS

Don Broadley & Jonathan Timberlake

Held at 7 Antelope Road, Matsheumhlope, Bulawayo, on 16 November 2000.

Jonathan Timberlake gave a brief presentation on databasing and what had been done with specimen/record based databases during the Zambezi Basin Wetlands project, and with the Acacia book. The importance of a gazetteer to speed up this process was outlined. Don Broadley continued, describing what he has done with herps, and what he will be doing for Conservation International (lizards and amphisbaenia of sub-Saharan Africa).

After discussion it was agreed that:

- (a) a strong attempt is made to get as many past and future records into an electronic database or spreadsheet format (e.g. Quattro Pro) as possible, so as to facilitate computerised mapping.
- (b) for future specimen/record recording, latitude and longitude figures to the nearest tenth of a minute (e.g. 30° 11.6') would be recorded where obtainable using a GPS.
- (c) for past records, and for gazetteers, latitude and longitude figures to the nearest minute (e.g. 30° 12') would be calculated where possible. Where not possible, figures would be calculated to the greatest resolution possible.
- (d) quarter degree grid square would not be used, except when no greater resolution is possible. Where there is no other possibility, the latitude/longitude figures for the centre of the QDS will be used for computerised mapping. This procedure would also apply to records where, for example, only a farm name is given.
- (e) in specimen/record spreadsheets, there is a column to indicated accuracy of record locstats (e.g. on a 1 - 3 scale).
- (f) John Minshull follow up on the status of the NHM fish gazetteer.
- (g) we follow up possibilities of getting the Flora Zambesiaca gazetteer scanned into a spreadsheet format. If this is not possible, or very expensive, that BFA uses its own funding to get this gazetteer typed up electronically.
- (h) that the FZ gazetteer is combined with other available gazetteers (e.g. Swynnerton, Ansell, Irwin) to produce one for the Zambesiaca area plus Namibia and Angola.
- (i) that the BFA uses its own funds for this, contracting data entry persons as necessary, and making sure all entries are checked.