

ONLINE IDENTIFICATION OF MYSIDA THROUGH NEMYS

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Identification of specimens is a task that every biologist is confronted with. The process of identification in many cases delivers many problems due to unavailability of keys, difficult specialised keys or old keys.

Within NeMys (<http://intramar.ugent.be/nemys>) recently a new identification module has been added. Based upon morphological data derived from published literature, polytomous digital identification keys are made. This kind of keys has the advantage that users are not forced to follow a predefined pathway (as in dichotomous keys), users can choose their best suitable characteristics to work with and the keys can be easily updated with new insights through a fully online key-generation system.

By using internet technologies, the identification keys are at any time anywhere available for use. As the data used in the keys is derived from the database system NeMys, it is also possible to check the identification process at any level, with literature sources, images, distribution patterns, ... on the website of NeMys.

This kind of technology opens new possibilities for biologists to share their taxonomic knowledge with a broader audience without being forced to go through the difficult process of creating dichotomous paper-based keys.