Abstracts of the 6th annual congress of the Gesellschaft für Biologische Systematik (GfBS, Society for Biological Systematics)

The Organisms Diversity & Evolution Electronic Supplement (http://www.senckenberg.de/odes/03-17) contains 53 short communications of oral presentations and posters from the 6th annual congress of the GfBS (see http://www.gfbs-home.de/), held in Dresden, 16–18 September 2003. The congress was organized by the Museum of Zoology (Museum für Tierkunde) Dresden, and opened by State Secretary Dr. Frank Schmidt (Saxon Ministry for Science and Arts).

The main topics of the congress were (i) speciation and species concepts, (ii) biodiversity and politics, (iii) dating of phylogenetic trees, and (iv) reticulate evolution. In addition, many oral and poster presentations on different topics of biodiversity were given, covering taxonomic aspects in the philosophy of science, political aspects of biodiversity research and biodiversity collections, as well as the following major organismic groups: Bacillariophyceae, Ustilaginales, Bryophytina, Magnoliopsida, Anthozoa, Porifera, Loricifera, Nematoda, Mollusca, Arthropoda, and Vertebrata.

Special meetings of museum curators (organized by Marion Kotrba and Matthias Nuß) and of the group of young systematists (organized by Anja Schunke) were held during the congress.

Invited lectures were given by Konrad Bachmann (“The species concept in Botany: 250 years old, 150 years dead, but still with us”), Rainer Willmann (“The structure of the Biological Species and species concepts in zoology”), Martin Schlegel and Ralf Meisterfeld (“The species problem in Protozoa revisited”), and Werner Mayer (“The problem of dating mitochondrial phylogenies, a case study using the lizard family Lacertidae”).

A public lecture was held by Peter Ax (“On the composition of living nature”). Peter Ax and Ernst Mayr were appointed honorary members of the society.

I wish to thank the staff of the Zoological Museum Dresden and all other persons involved for their help during the congress.

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editor of the abstracts