



March 2018

1) Biology18 - University of Neuchâtel

350 participants, 4 keynote lectures, 53 regular presentations, two parallel sessions, 16 flash talks and 129 posters from students and early-career researchers, plus two pre-conference events and a scientific speed-dating – Biology18 in Neuchâtel confirmed the success this meeting has been showing recently. It is clearly the biggest meeting on organismic biology in Switzerland and the SSS is proud to be part of it. We will continue to work with the local organizers to have every year a session on Systematics, and when possible, to include a systematist among the keynote speakers. But to achieve this, we also rely on SSS members to be willing to take part to the local organization!



In 2019, the Biology meeting will be organized in Zurich.

2) A bizarre 240 million years old fish, species of the year



The extinct coelacanth *Foreyia maxkuhni*, our species of the year 2018, was in the e-news for a few days in January: in *le Nouvelliste*, in Swissinfo, and on the front page of the ScNat website.

New Species Swiss Made, the annual list of species described by researchers working in Switzerland, is now going on for its fourth year. A simple yet efficient way to put systematic works into the spotlight!

2015 = 104 new species

2016 = 203 new species

2017 = 140 new species

⇒ **Don't forget to send us the publication of your new species in 2018!** We scan the literature for new species but the accuracy of this list depends on information sent by the members of the SSS.

3) Call for papers

The "*Bulletin de la Société neuchâteloise des sciences naturelles*" is making a call for manuscripts on natural history topics for the 2018 issue (deadline 15 May). For more information, see:

<http://www.unine.ch/snsn>



4) Important dates in 2018

30 April Student travel grant submission deadline – for MS or PhD candidates in a Swiss research institution, who have a research project that includes systematics and who plan to submit a talk or a poster to an international meeting.

31 July Best Master thesis prize deadline – the yearly prize that rewards an excellent contribution in the field of systematics at the level of a Master thesis.

8-9 November SSS-Day in Bern – A two-days meeting: the first day will focus on fungi (instructor: Beatrice Senn-Irlet), the second day will be dedicated to regular talks and the general assembly.

17 November Natural History Collections Day – One of the main goals of the SSS is to promote the natural history collections held in Switzerland. We are organizing a common event in all of Switzerland in the form of an open-door day on natural history collections. Make sure your institution is part of this effort! Coming soon: the map of participating institutions.

Check our website for details

5) Nomenclature in the hot seat

Last year, Garnett & Christidis [*Taxonomy anarchy hampers conservation. Nature. 2017; 546(7656): 25-27. <https://doi.org/10.1038/546025a>*] created quite a buzz in our community in suggesting that biological names should be managed by some ad hoc authority rather than by taxonomists. The most comprehensive rebuttal was just published this month by Thomson and 183 authors from around the world [*Taxonomy based on science is necessary for global conservation. PLoS Biol 16(3): e2005075. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.2005075>*]. Although it is a bit sad to - again and again - have to explain that taxonomy is a science (!), this paper is an opportunity to reassert the importance of systematics, its relation with nomenclature and, more generally, to examine its complex interactions with conservation issues. Fortunately, the bureaucratic dream, but scientific nightmare, of "absolute taxonomic stability" that seems to be desired by Garnett & Christidis is not for tomorrow.

Another publication that very recently provoked a great deal of criticism is the book edited by Christenhusz, Fay & Byng [*The Global Flora. A practical flora to vascular plant species of the world. Special Edition, GLOVAP Nomenclature Part 1, Vol 4: 1-155*] in which they make no less than ... 415 new names and 3286 new combinations in many plant families !! These concern taxonomical groups these authors were not working on, or, maybe even worse, were actively studied by others, including students. The book is self-published and is overwhelmingly regarded as an obvious example of non-cooperative work, to the point that many of our botanist colleagues consider it very close to "taxonomy vandalism". The botanical community is preparing a coordinated reply.

6) Membership fee for 2018

Don't forget your annual subscription to the SSS! 30 CHF or 10 CHF for students. For your convenience we have added a payment order.

