

HOLOTIPUS

HOLOTIPUS
ONLINE

MAGAZINE



IN MARINE BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

DOI * 10.5281/zenodo.4500908



HOLOTIPUS EDITORIAL

OPEN  ACCESS

Published on 9 March 2021

HOLOTIPUS IN MARINE BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

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URN:LSID:ZOOBANK.ORG:PUB:2F5C7AEB-FACF-4443-9AA9-691D24F911DC
10.5281/ZENODO.4500908

The oceans are a vast yet fragile environment, and one of the biggest issues scientists have to tackle today is the conservation of marine biodiversity. In 1975, to try to address the physical, chemical and biological alteration of these delicate ecosystems, 16 Mediterranean States together with the European Union, implemented the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP). The aim was to safeguard the marine environment and promote its development in the Mediterranean basin.

Marine conservation is a challenging goal as, since ancient times, the seas have been exploited by humans for their products and the animal species which live within them. Only in recent years has there been widespread awareness that such resources are finite and must urgently be protected. If we are to continue to enjoy the bounties that the seas provide us with, then they must be used in a careful and sustainable manner.

A new concept is thus beginning to develop: a sea-based future economy (Blue Economy). Simultaneously, the success of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD, 2008/56/EU) lies in the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES). Once obtained, these will ensure clean, healthy and productive seas.

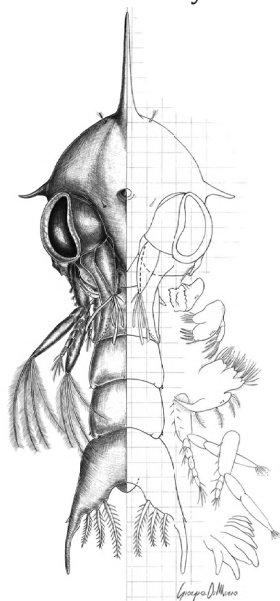
A key step in achieving these ambitious aims is the generation of knowledge of the species affected and the interactions between them and the environment itself – the field of “marine biodiversity”. The assessment of the status of such ecosystems and the measurement of threats and distress that

they may be suffering can only be confirmed by professional researchers, who are able to identify the species. Following years of side-lining in favour of other branches of biology, the role of the systematic biologist is now once again back in the limelight, thanks to this vital role in global conservation.

Biodiversity cannot be measured or assessed solely with instruments, and the unique expertise of a systematic biologist, decades in the making, is the only valid method for fully understanding the impact of human activity. Nevertheless, the precious support of molecular technology is also vital.

With its editorial policy, *Holotipus* (open access, peer-reviewed, and no article processing charges) supports and reaffirms the importance of taxonomic and morphological studies, by accepting works on marine biodiversity and its conservation. The journal firmly believes that we must “understand in order to protect”.

Holotipus is a journal for researchers who discover new species, or who want to review the morphology and/or systematic position of a taxon. We hope that authors and readers will find it a welcoming and valuable addition to the scientific literature.



Credits: Cover photo by Ines Álvarez Fdez, p. 2: Zoea of Palicus caronii by Giorgia di Muzio from: Di Muzio G., Battuello M., Mussat Sartor R., Nurra N., Pessani D., 2018. The dying art of naming. 79° Congresso Unione Zoologica Italiana, September 25-28, 2018, Lecce (Italy). Winner of the first award for young researchers.