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GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES OF ANGOLA: Towards an Atlas of the Angolan herpetofauna

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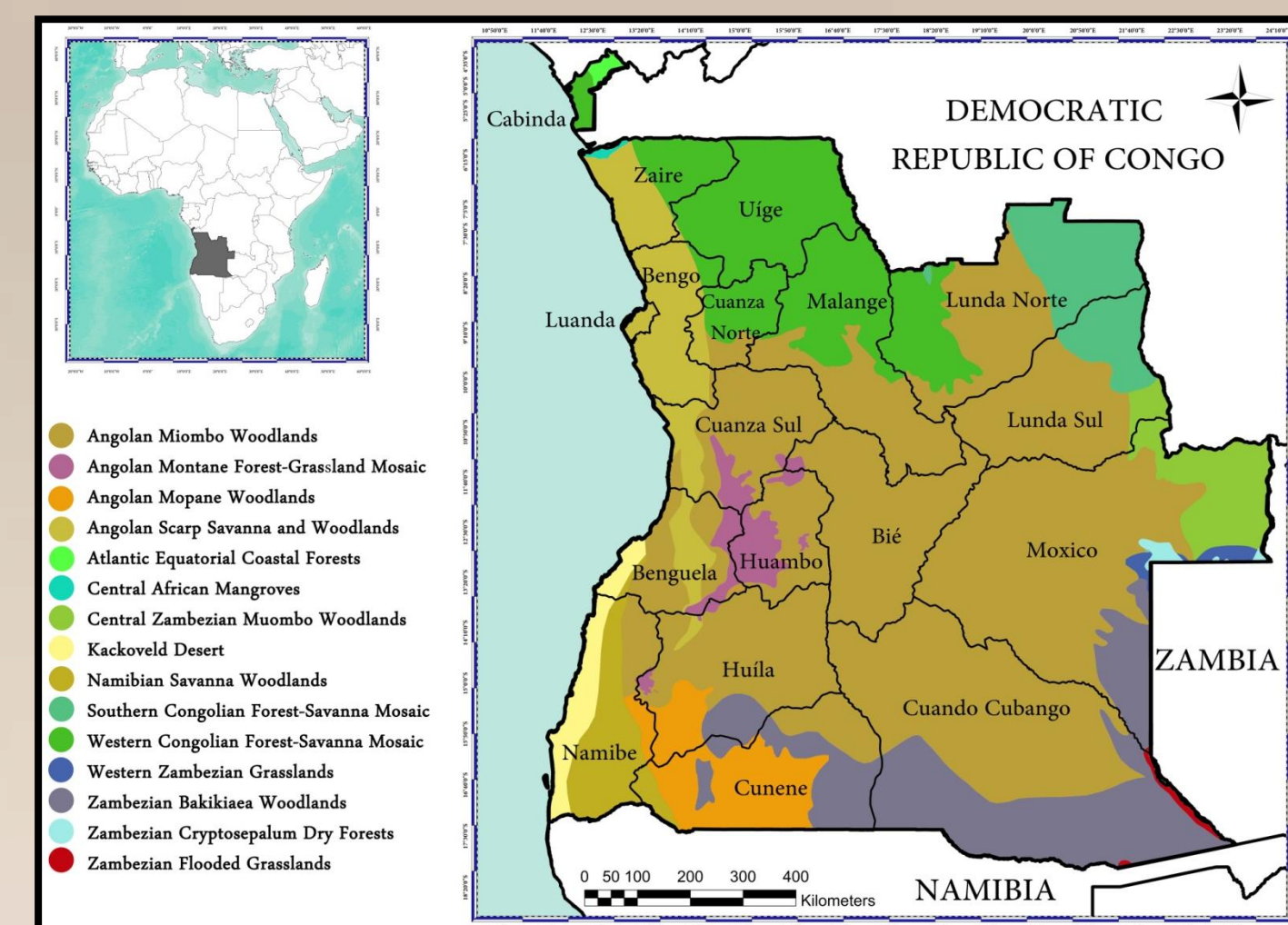


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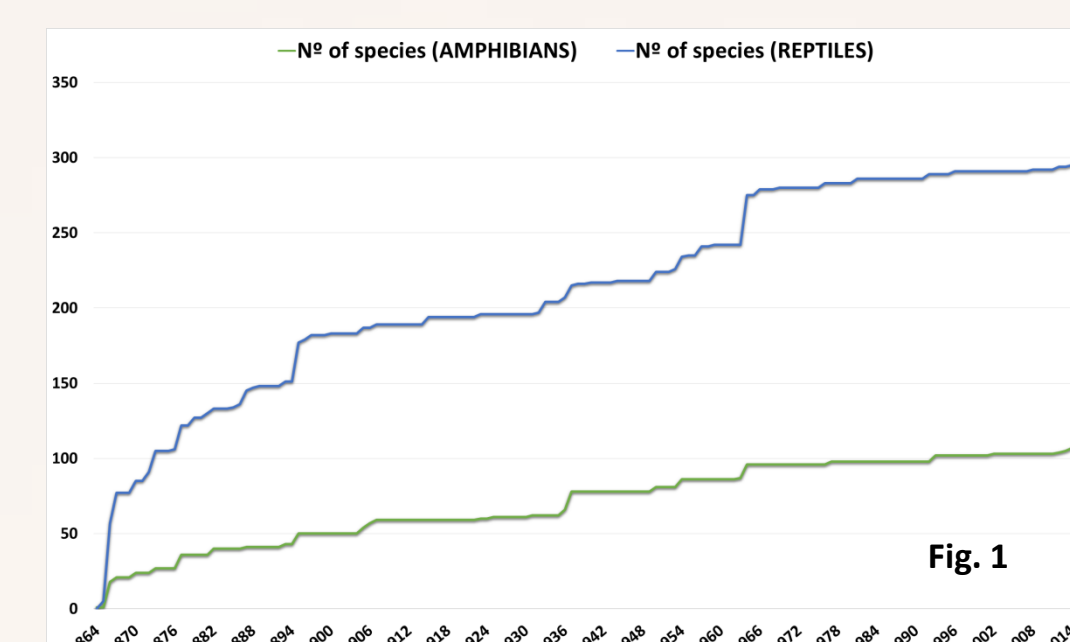
Introduction:

- Angola is among the largest countries in Africa. Its topographical and climatic complexity lead to a great diversity of biomes and habitats, and its fauna and flora represents an important puzzle piece for understanding biogeographic patterns across sub-Saharan Africa.
- Angola is perhaps the only biodiverse country in Africa that remains seriously lacking in surveys of vertebrate diversity.
- Data regarding the occurrence and geographical distribution of amphibians and reptiles in Angola is currently scattered across museum specimens housed in natural history institutions across the world and in many books and papers published since the nineteenth century.
- This data is not easily accessible nor properly formatted for use in distributional, niche-modeling, conservation studies or as a basis for future biodiversity surveys. This hinders future studies and conservation actions.
- Due to threats faced by amphibians and reptiles worldwide, there is the need for an update overview of the diversity and distribution of amphibians and reptiles in Angola.



Results:

- A total of 1311 amphibians and 3256 reptile records were georeferenced;
- Approximately 110 species of amphibians and 307 species of reptiles were recorded for the country, although some records are doubtful;
- Reports of additional taxa of amphibians and reptiles for the country has not been regular through time (Fig. 1);



- There is a complete lack of data on amphibians (Fig.2) and reptiles (Fig. 3) for large areas of the Angola.

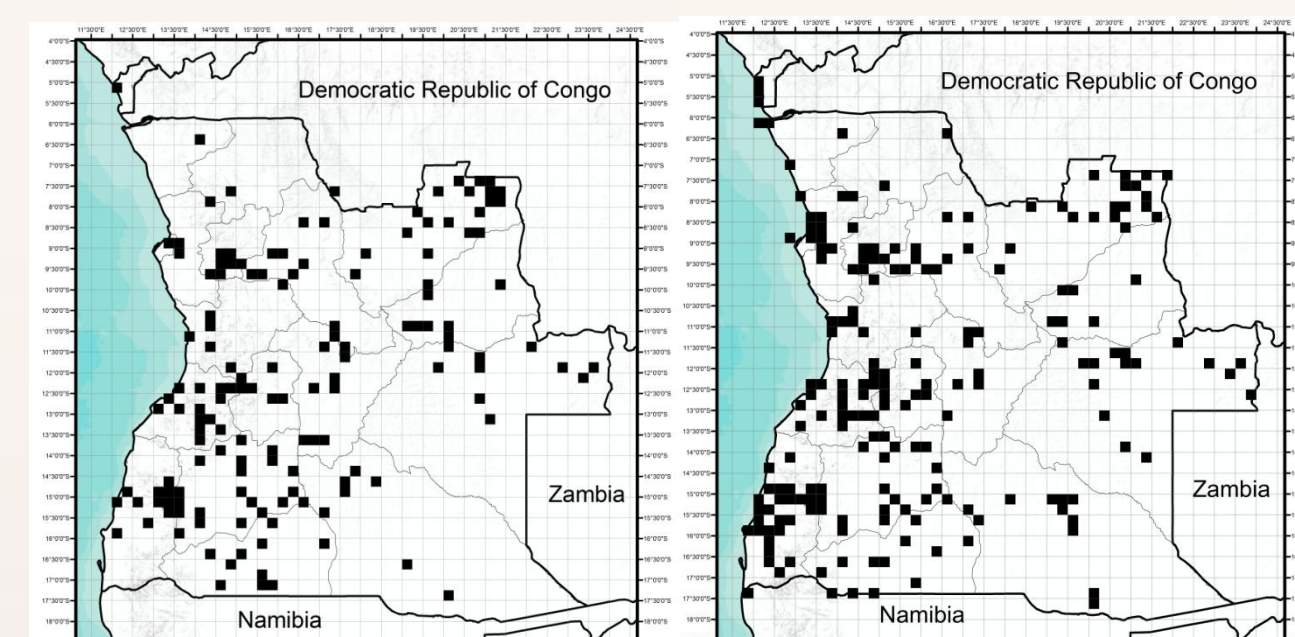
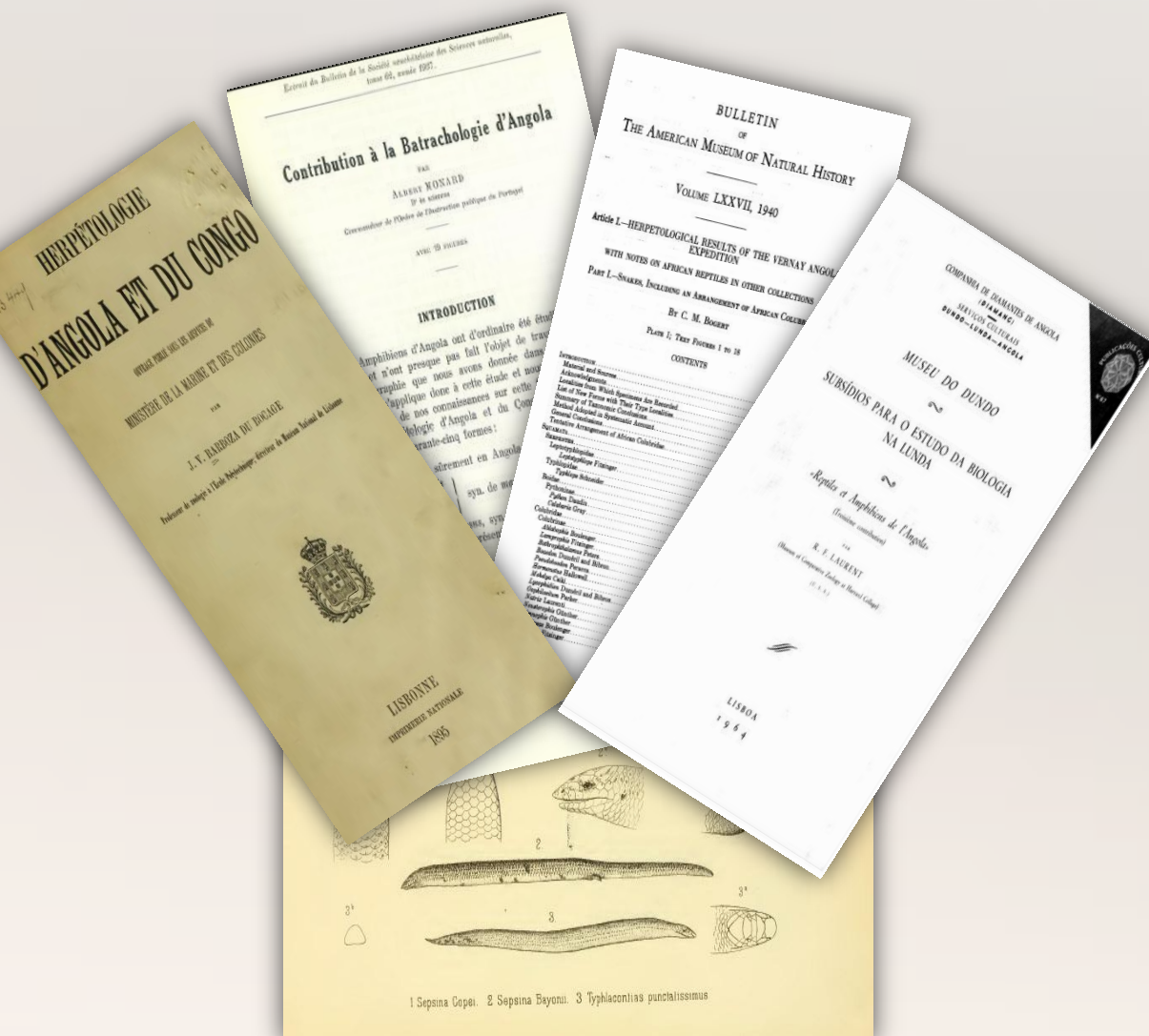


Fig. 2 – Map showing the localities for which there are amphibian records.

Fig. 3 – Map showing the localities for which there are reptile records.



Materials and methods:

- We compiled species distribution data based on all available bibliographic references about the Angolan herpetofauna.
- Each taxon identified was updated to currently accepted nomenclature.
- These data were georeferenced and plotted on a quarter-degree grid cell map of the country.
- Maps were created for each species and different groups, as well as species richness maps.
- A species account was created for each species.

Towards an Atlas:

- Combining the bibliographic data with the museological records, which are currently being compiled and georeferenced, it will be possible to have a near complete overview of the knowledge available for the Angolan herpetofauna.
- Cross-checking bibliographic data with museum specimens will allow us to solve some current problems (abnormal distributions, undetermined species, etc.), and correct and confirm presently known distributions.
- With the preparation of identification keys, high definition pictures of specimens and illustrations, and detailed species accounts, we anticipate the publication of the first Atlas of the Angolan amphibians and reptiles in 2016/2017;
- An Atlas will greatly contribute to future studies on Angolan herpetofauna and its conservation.

Photo: *Rhoptropus Boultoni* Schmidt, 1933, from Pico Azevedo, Namibe Province, Angola. © L. Ceríaco 2013

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