

OR122*Standardising morphological trait schemes: Introducing the global ant database***Catherine Parr**, Heloise Gibb, Nathan Sanders, Rob Dunn

While traditionally much of ecology has focused on species richness and composition in communities, it is recognised that not all species are equal. Consequently functional trait approaches to ecology are now increasingly commonplace. Functional traits are features of organisms that have demonstrable links to the organism's ecosystem role or performance. Using functional traits can be of particular value because a trait-based understanding of community responses to global change drivers can enable generalisations across ecosystems. Here we introduce a new trait scheme for ants which builds on an established database, the global ant database (this contains community data on species and their abundances). We describe a set of standardised morphological traits for use in functional ecology work. The traits proposed, if used broadly, will enable direct comparison across different study regions facilitating understanding of the generality of patterns, how communities are structured and how their responses can vary. Given access to online specimens (e.g., AntWeb) and the increasing interest in functional traits, there is much scope to build a significant resource for current and future myrmecologists.