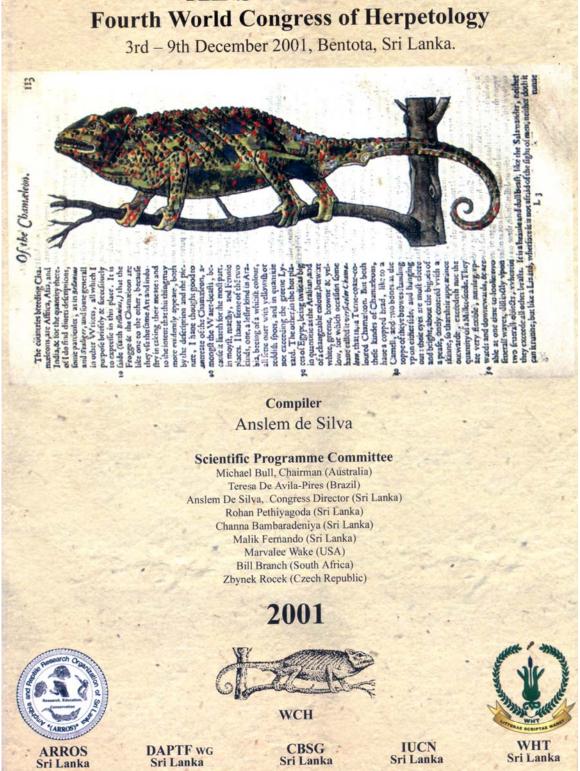
## ABSTRACTS Vorld Congress of Hernet



## DAS

## COMPARISON OF THE AMPHIBIAN FAUNAS OF SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Indraneil DAS

Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. Email: idas@ibec.unimas.my

The amphibian fauna of tropical and subtropical Asia is known to be among the most diverse on earth. Two regions are rather well marked in terms of geological history, vegetation and biota. Southern Asia as used here covers the Indian Subcontinent, defined as extending from the southern slopes of the Himalayas, south to the Indian Peninsula, and from the Balochistan highlands to the mountainous country of north-eastern India. It includes the countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, mainland India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. South-east Asia includes the mainland portion to the east of the Indian Subcontinent, from Myanmar, east through Indo-China and Indo-Malaya, including the islands situated on the Sunda Shelf, the Philippines and Sulawesi, but excluding those on the Sahul Shelf. Inger (1999) recorded approximately 650 nominal species from these two regions (although the manuscript went to press in 1994). Many additional taxa have since been recorded since, especially from the hill country of Sri Lanka, where intensive sampling has taken place. The present paper compares the amphibian fauna of southern and south-eastern Asia.

The fauna of both regions are composed of a widespread lowland fauna and a more restricted (including regional endemic) montane fauna. Taxa common to both regions include human commensals as well as species complexes that require taxonomic revision. A number of south-east Asian lineages show disjunct distribution in south Asia, which are considered relatively recent invasion and extinction of intervening populations due to climate change. South-east Asia, with a land area slightly larger than south Asia (4,489,496 sq km vs 4,073,044 sq km) has a significantly larger amphibian fauna (445 vs 258 nominal species). The richness of the south-east Asian fauna is attributable to the rapid pace of evolution on islands and their emigration to the adjacent mainland, as opposed to the presumably low levels of speciation on the south Asian mainland.