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Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Annobón (Equatorial Guinea)

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I. Abstract

An updated checklist of the vascular plants of Annobón Island (Equatorial Guinea) is presented. Two hundred and ninety-five taxa of Angiosperms in 211 genera and 68 families and 51 species of Pteridophytes in 31 genera and 18 families are listed from Annobón. The most represented families are Leguminosae (38 taxa), Gramineae (29 taxa) and Orchidaceae (28 taxa). In addition bibliographic references have been collated and checked. Thirty-eight species are included based on records from the literature where their distribution ranges suggest they should occur on Annobón. Fifty-four introduced species that have become naturalized are listed. Twenty-four taxa are recorded for the first time, three of which were not previously known for Equatorial Guinea. *Peperomia blanda* is recorded as a new for West Tropical Africa. At present 23 taxa are known to be endemic to Annobón or to Annobón and the islands of São Tomé or/and Príncipe. The percentage of endemic species is 7.8. The small area of Annobón and the strict application of conservation criteria indicated that every endemic of the island should be considered as threatened under IUCN guidelines. Species conservation assessments were undertaken for 23 taxa using IUCN criteria; 19 of these represent the first assessments for these species. The catalogue includes accepted names, synonyms and voucher specimens.

Key words: biodiversity, Gulf of Guinea Islands, floristics, IUCN category

II. Introduction

Annobón is a small island of 17 km² situated near the Equator in the Gulf of Guinea. It is part of a volcanic mountain range which includes Bioko, São Tomé and Príncipe. Of the four islands of the Gulf of Guinea, Annobón is the smallest and farthest from the mainland (360 km from Gabon, and 190 km from São Tomé). Exell (1973: 327) referred to Annobón as an “almost oceanic island”. In contrast, he called São Tomé and Príncipe “maritime islands” indicating that they did not meet the characteristics attributed to oceanic islands.

The island is composed of basaltic rocks. A map (Figure 1) shows three main elements: a) the crater occupied by the lake A Pot (at 150 m the sea level) with several adventitious cones that reach even the 400 m crater in the SE of Punta Manjob, b) Santa Mina Mountains up to 613 m, and c) a corridor from NE to SW which links the bays of San Pedro and Santa Cruz, on the course of the river Anganchi (De Castro & De la Calle 1985: 67). In Annobón, soils are of the same volcanic origin as those of Bioko but with lower silica and higher proportions of ferromagnesian element making the soils ultrabasic (De Castro & De la Calle 1985: 67, Fa 1991: 22). Given its small size there is no major river flow. Small permanent streams on the island are arranged radially from the higher areas to the coast (Figures 1, 2). Lake A Pot occupies a volcanic crater of 700 m in diameter and about 150 m elevation (Figure 3) (De Castro & De la Calle 1985: 17, Fa 1991: 22). Most of the coast is cliffs. No potential areas for mangrove and few for dunes can be found. Annobón has a climate with an average temperature of 26.1° C with

Davis & Figueiredo (2007) have been adapted to the mentioned criteria. Similar adaptations have been suggested for those included by IUCN (2011). It is clear that more data are needed to properly evaluate the conservation status of each of these endemic species. We consider essential to include these taxa with their proposed status in the red list in order to set up their conservation actions as Annobón's conservation priorities.

The most represented families are Leguminosae, Gramineae and Orchidaceae (Table 3). Apart from Leguminosae and Gramineae which are represented by many widespread herbs, the most notable feature is the relatively high numbers of Orchidaceae, Rubiaceae and Euphorbiaceae species, which was also noted by Exell (1944: 49).

TABLE 3. Number of taxa of the most represented families of vascular plants from Annobón and São Tomé, according to different sources.

	Annobón (Exell 1973)	Annobón (own data)	São Tomé (Figueiredo 1994)
Leguminosae	24	38	77
Gramineae	25	29	29
Orchidaceae	18	28	28
Rubiaceae	14	15	28
Euphorbiaceae	13	14	30
Cyperaceae	11	11	11
Compositae	8	9	22

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