A georeferenced dataset for occurrence records of the phylum Rotifera in Africa

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ABSTRACT

We report a dataset of all known and published occurrence records of animals of the phylum Rotifera, including Bdelloidea, Monogononta, and Seisonacea (with the exclusion of Acanthocephala) for Africa and surrounding islands and archipelagos. The dataset includes 27,455 records of 957 taxa (subspecies: 39; species: 819; species group: 1; genus: 81; family: 17), gathered from 706 published papers. The published literature spans from 1854 to 2022, with the highest number of records in the decades 1990-1999 and 2010-2019. The African countries with the highest number of taxa are Nigeria, Algeria, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whereas no records are yet available for a dozen countries. The number of species known from each country can be explained mostly by sampling efforts, measured as the number of papers published for each country up to now. The dataset is available through the Open Science Framework (OSF) and in the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

INTRODUCTION

Because microscopic animals have been assumed to be widely distributed, they have been viewed to possess little biogeographical interest (Artois *et al*., 2011). Yet, in recent times cosmopolitanism has been refuted for micrometazoans; as a result of this new interpretation detailed biogeographic data is needed to improve our understanding of biodiversity across multiple taxa. Yet, except for tardigrades (Mcinnes *et al*., 2017; Michalczyk *et al*., 2022), detailed lists of occurrences for different areas of the world are still lacking for many microscopic taxa.

Since Rousselet's (1909) pronouncement of their cosmopolitan distribution, rotifers have been considered to be biogeographically irrelevant (Dumont, 1983). Further complicating our understanding of rotifer biogeography is the fact that knowledge of their distribution is biased by the distribution of taxonomists studying them (Fontaneto *et al*., 2012) and by the occurrence of species complexes that may blur geographical differences between genetically distinct species, undistinguishable using morphology only (Fontaneto *et al*., 2009; Gilbert and Walsh, 2005; Gomez *et al*., 2002; Kordbacheh *et al*., 2007; Mills *et al*., 2017).

The phylum Rotifera comprises about 2,000 species of microscopic animals living in any type of water, including freshwater, brackish, and marine environments, but also limno-terrestrial habitats such as the thin water layers surrounding mosses, lichens, and soil particles (Wallace *et al*., 2006). Also for rotifers, reviews of occurrence records have been published in the last century: the first example is from Africa (De Ridder, 1986, 1991a), and it was then followed by a similar work for all the world except Africa (De Ridder and Segers, 1997). Recent studies also have focused on smaller regions: e.g. Mexico (Sarma *et al*., 2021), Greece (Stamou *et al*., 2022), and Italy (Fontaneto *et al*., 2022). But few of those studies report datasets of georeferenced records to be used for biogeographical inference: e.g. for Antarctica (Garlasché *et*

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al., 2020), Africa (Smolak *et al*., 2023), and Italy (Ferrari *et al.*, 2023). The aim of our study is to produce a georeferenced dataset of rotifers on Africa and many of its surrounding islands. Our extensive screening of the published literature allowed us to report 957 taxa from the area and make the dataset freely available online through the Open Science Framework (OSF) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). The number of known species from Africa increased from the 639 reported in the first review from 1986 (De Ridder, 1986) to the 765 in the most recent compilation in 2022 (Smolak *et al*., 2023). Segers (2008) reported 591 rotifer species (453 Monogononta, 138 Bdelloidea) from the Afrotropical biogeographic region, partially overlapping with the geographic scope of the current review.

Summary statistics

The dataset of known rotifer records in Africa and surrounding islands was built starting from 706 published papers, spanning from 1854 to 2022. The distribution of papers by year reveals 1990-1999 and 2010-2019 as the decades with the highest number of faunistic studies on African rotifers (Fig. 1).

The dataset includes 27,455 records of 957 valid taxa of rotifers: 39 at subspecies, 819 taxa at species, 1 at species group, 81 at genus, and 17 at family level. This detailed literature search increased the number of known rotifer taxa at species, subspecies, form and variety level reported in previous reviews, which were 639 in 1986 (De Ridder, 1986) and 765 in 2022 (Smolak *et al.*, 2023). Of the taxa reported in the current dataset, 167 (18%) are Bdelloidea, 665 (69%) Ploima, 97 (10%) Flosculariaceae, 27 (3%) Collothecacea and one representative of Seisonacea, the marine epizoic rotifer *Seison africanus* Sørensen, Segers & Funch, 2005 described and recorded only from coastal waters of Kenya (Sørensen *et al*., 2005).

The countries with the highest number of taxa and of records are Nigeria, Algeria, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo and Egypt, whereas no records are currently known for eight countries of the continent of Africa: Central African Republic, Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Swaziland, Togo, and four nearby islands: Cape Verde, Mauritius, Mayotte, Sao Tome and Principe (Fig. 2, Tab. 1). The number of species known for each country correlates with the number of papers published for the same region (Fig. 3), supporting the strong effect of sampling bias in the current knowledge on biodiversity and biogeography for rotifers (Dumont, 1983; Fontaneto *et al*., 2012).

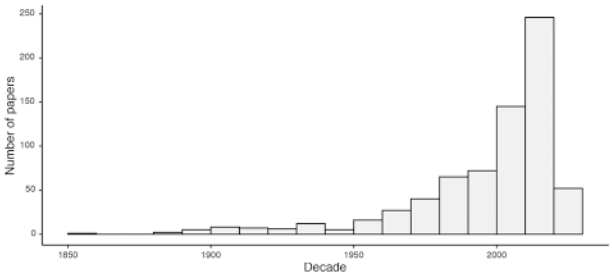

Fig. 1. Number of publications mentioning rotifer occurrence records in Africa and surrounding islands from 1854 to 2022 at the rank of subspecies, species, genus, and family.

The dataset is freely available from the Open Science Framework, OSF (link: https://osf.io/p9b7d/): it includes 22 columns reporting metadata and additional information on taxonomy and habitat data (Tab. 2). All 27,455 records of valid subspecies, species, genus, and family level (without *species inquirendae*, *nomina nuda*, and *genera inquirenda*) have been uploaded to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, GBIF (https://doi.org/10.15468/ve5ygw).

Dataset description

The data were structured based on the Darwin Core standard (Wieczorek *et al.*, 2012). The dataset is structured to have in each row every record of a rotifer taxon from a sample from Africa and surrounding islands, as cited in the literature. The columns report the original and updated taxon name, additional taxonomic information together with origin of the data and habitat (Tab. 2).
Object name: African rotifer records.
Dataset citation: African rotifer records.
Character encoding: UTF-8.
Format name: csv.
Format version: 1.8.
Distribution (permanent link), OSF: https://osf.io/p9b7d/, GBIF: https://www.gbif.org/dataset/218eaa87-c912-4c04-ac24-020ada9c594c
Date of creation: 15 October 2022.
Date of last revision: 20 February 2023.
Date of publication: 13 December 2022.
Update policy: The dataset at OSF cannot be updated, but any new record uploaded in GBIF, uploaded by anyone, will contribute to updating the data on georeferenced records of African rotifers.
Language: English.
Licence of use: both access and use are free to any user. The authors would appreciate users providing a link to the original dataset (OSF: https://osf.io/p9b7d/, GBIF: https://doi.org/10.15468/ve5ygw) or when researchers use the data to cite the present paper. Stakeholders interested in additional information can contact authors *via* the contact information provided in the metadata.
Metadata language: English.
Metadata managers: Diego Fontaneto (diego.fontaneto

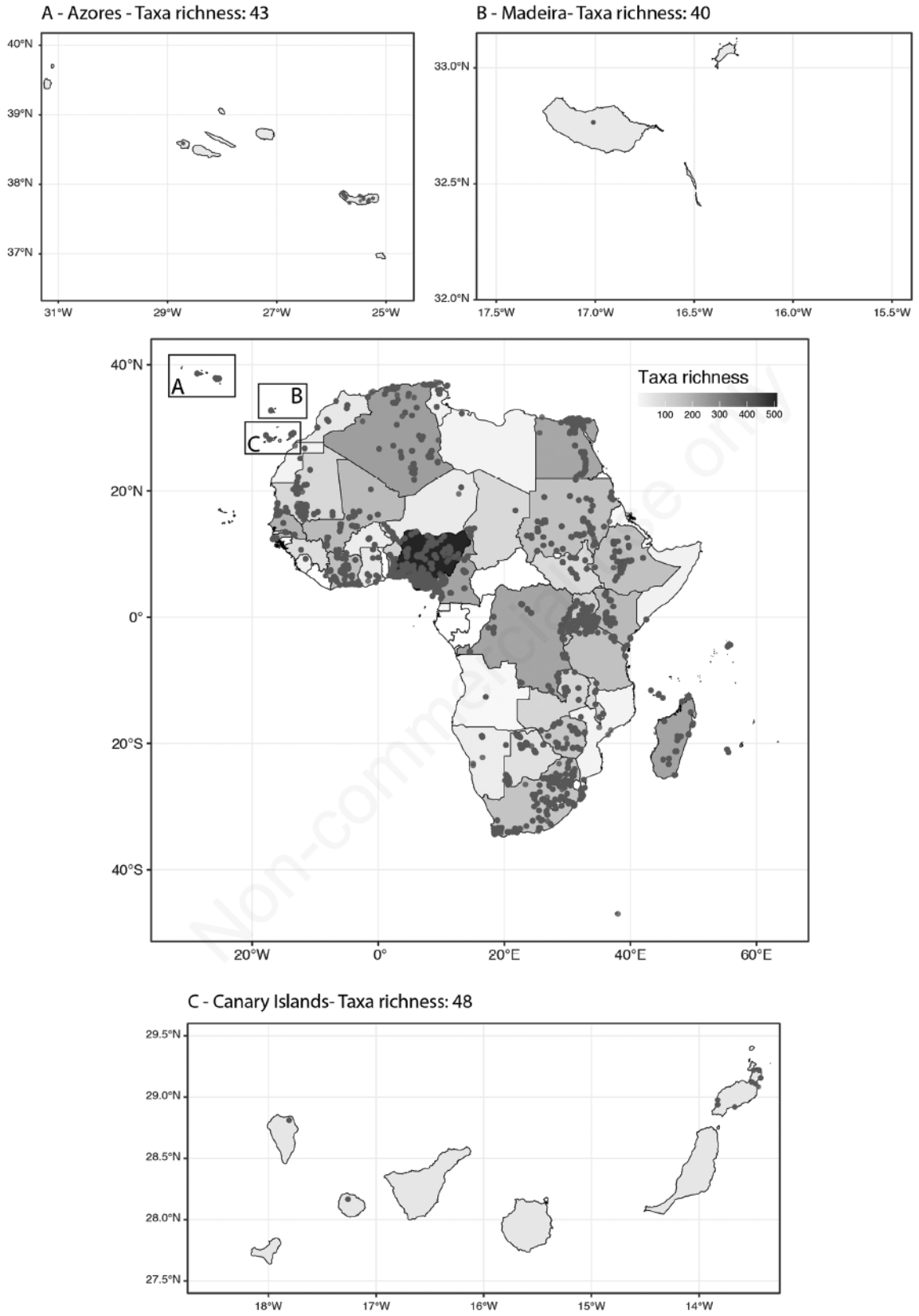

Fig. 2. Sampling sites distributed along the African continent and surrounding islands. Shades of grey are proportional to taxon richness (at the rank of subspecies, species, genus, and family) for each country. Purple circles represent georeferenced sampling sites.

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Management details

Project title: A georeferenced dataset of known African rotifer records.
Database managers: Lyudmila Kamburska, Tommaso Cancellario.
Temporal coverage: the present dataset refers to all the records of rotifers published in the literature until December 2022. The current range spans from 1854 to December 2022.
Record basis: Literature records.
IT specialists: Lyudmila Kamburska, Tommaso Cancellario.

Geographic coverage

Study area: Sites are distributed along the African political countries and surrounding areas (Fig. 1). The data are georeferenced according to WGS 84 datum. Georeferenced information was gathered directly from the published information, when possible. Alternatively, if precise geographic information was reported in the literature, the georeferenced data was inferred with the highest possible precision. In several cases, no georeferenced information is available.
Bounding box: min Longitude: 31.26 – min Latitude: 46.98 – max Longitude: 63.50 – max Latitude: 39.72.

Geographical subdivisions: Records were attributed to the African continent and surrounding islands.
Sampling design: The general strategy was to try to obtain all the published literature records of rotifers known from the African territory, to cover different freshwater, marine, brackish, and limno-terrestrial habitats.
Habitat type: Information on habitat types was gathered from the original literature and reported as such. No attempt to standardise habitat types was performed and the different habitats are reported in the OSF dataset as in the original literature.
Biogeographic region: Afrotropical region, and the southern parts of the Palearctic region.
Country: All African countries for which rotifer records exist (Tab. 1).
Quality control for geographic data: Quality control was performed using Google maps identification of sites, and latitude and longitude coordinates provided in the literature or inferred from it. Geographic coordinate format, coordinates within country boundaries, and absence of ASCII anomalous characters in the dataset were additionally controlled.

Literature search

General description: The information on occurrence records of rotifer species at each site comes from published scientific papers, as well as grey literature such as theses and notes in technical reports from local authorities.

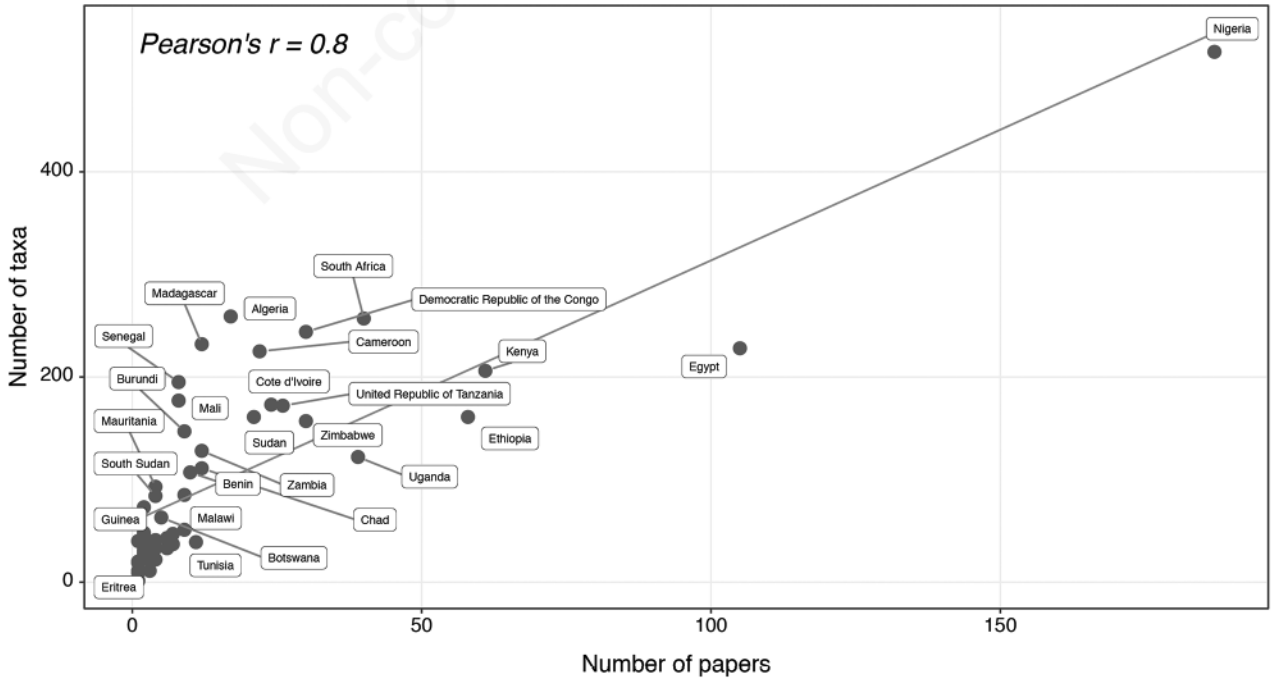

Fig. 3. Correlation plot between number of published papers and rotifer taxon richness for each African country.

Tab. 1. List of references reporting records of rotifers at the rank of subspecies, species, genus, and family, divided by country or islands, sorted alphabetically. References are in alphabetical order within each geographical unit.

Country	Reference
Algeria	Beadle, 1943; Bouazzara *et al*., 2021; Cherbi *et al.*, 2008; D'Hondt, 1974; De Ridder, 1987a, 1991b; Djezzar *et al.*, 2014; Gauthier, 1928; Gurney, 1908; Haimaidi-Chergui *et al*., 2013; Hamaidi *et al*., 2008; Hamil *et al*., 2021, 2022; Samraoui *et al*., 1998; Segers, 1995; Seurat, 1930; Smaoune *et al*., 2021
Angola	Kalous *et al*., 2009
Azores	Barrois, 1887, 1896; Barrois and von Daday, 1894; Bērziņš, 1973; de Guerne, 1888; De Ridder, 1991a; Fontaneto *et al*., 2021; Jörger *et al*., 2021; Richard, 1896
Benin	Adamou *et al.*, 2022; Adandedjan *et al*., 2017; Akélé *et al*., 2022; Elegbe *et al*., 2016, 2017; Houssou, 2012; Houssou *et al*., 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020
Botswana	Brain *et al*., 1995; Green, 2003; Hart, 1997; West, 2016; West and van As, 2021
Burkina Faso	De Ridder, 1985b; Ouéda *et al*., 2007, 2017; Ouedraogo *et al*., 2015
Burundi	Baribwegure and Segers, 2000, 2001; Buhungu *et al*., 2019a, 2019b, 2020, 2021; Gillard, 1957; Segers, 1995; Segers and Baribwegure, 1996
Cameroon	Akum *et al*., 2001; Chiambeng *et al*., 1991, 1994, 2004; Corbet *et al*., 1973; Dakwen *et al*., 2019; Essomba *et al*., 2021; Green, 1972b; Green *et al*., 1974; Kling, 1987; Mogue *et al.*, 2022; Nana *et al*., 2018; Onana *et al*., 2014; Pouomogne *et al*., 2022; Prudence *et al*., 2015; Segers, 1995; Segers and Mertens, 1997; Tchapgnouo *et al*., 2012, 2021; Zébazé Togouet *et al*., 2005, 2006, 2009
Canary Islands	Martinez *et al.*, 2019; Velasco, 1990
Chad	Burgis and Symoens, 1987; De Ridder, 1987a, 1991b; Gras *et al*., 1967; Iltis and Riou-Duwat, 1971; Pourriot, 1968, 1971; Pourriot *et al*., 1967; Robinson and Robinson, 1971; Saint-Jean, 1983; Segers, 1995; Tahir *et al*., 2020
Comoros	Leboulanger *et al*., 2011; Segers, 1992
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Baribwegure and Segers, 2001; Darchambeau *et al*., 2012; De Beauchamp, 1932a, 1939; De Ridder, 1981, 1987a, 1991a; De Smet, 1988, 1989, 1990; De Smet and Bafort, 1992; Evens, 1947, 1949; Gillard, 1952a, 1952b, 1957, 1959; Green, 1967; Isumbisho Mwapu, 2006; Kondo and Hori, 1986; Lehman *et al.*, 1998; Luo and Segers, 2013, 2020; Magis, 1967; Reyntjens, 1982; Segers, 1995; Van Oye, 1926a, 1926b; Wulfert, 1965; Zanga *et al*., 2022
Egypt	Abdel Aziz, 2002, 2005; Abdel Aziz and Aboul Ezz, 2004; Abdel Aziz and Gharib, 2006; Abdel Aziz *et al.*, 2011; Abdel-Aziz, 2000; Abdel-Aziz and Aboul-Ezz, 2003; Abdel-Aziz and Dorgham, 2001; Abdel-Malek and Ishak, 1980; Abo-Taleb, 2014, 2017; Aboul Ezz *et al.*, 2014; Ahmed, 1994; Ahmed *et al*., 2017; Ali, 2008; Alprol *et al.*, 2021; Barrois and von Daday, 1894; Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Crul and Roest, 1995; Daday, 1910; De Ridder, 1987a; Dumont and El Shabrawy, 2008; El-Bassat, 2008; El-Bassat and Taylor, 2007; El-Damhogy *et al.*, 2016; El-Feky, 2017; El-Gindy *et al.*, 2008; El-Maghraby *et al*., 1963; El-Naggar, 2015; El-Otify and Iskaros, 2015, 2018; El-Serafy *et al*., 2009; El-Shabrawy, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2009; El-Shabrawy and Bek, 2018; El-Shabrawy and Dumont, 2003, 2009; El-Shabrawy and Germoush, 2014; El-Shabrawy and Gohar, 2008; El-Shabrawy *et al*., 2015, 2017; El-Tohamy, 2015; El-Tohamy and Abdel-Baki, 2019; El-Tohamy *et al*., 2017, 2018; Elfeky and Sayed, 2014; Fishar *et al.,* 2019; Fouda *et al*., 1987; Guerguess, 1993; Hassan *et al*., 2017; Hauer, 1963; Hegab *et al*., 2020; Helal, 1981; Helal, 2006; Heneash, 2015; Heneash *et al.*, 2015; Iskaros *et al*., 2008; Khalifa, 2014; Khalifa and Bendary, 2016; Khalifa and El-Hady, 2010; Khalifa and Mageed, 2002; Khalifa and Sabae, 2012, 2013; Khalifa *et al*., 2015; Khalil, 1990; Klimowicz, 1961a, 1961b, 1962; Mageed, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Mageed and Heikal, 2006; Mageed and Konsowa, 2002; McLaren, 1982; Mohammad *et al.*, 2021; Mola, 2011; Mola and Ahmed, 2015; Mola and El-Rashid, 2012; Mola *et al.*, 2018; Obuid-Allah *et al*., 2016; Ramdani *et al*., 2001; Rashid, 1995; Saad *et al.*, 2013; Salem, 2021; Salem and Mageed, 2021; Schmarda, 1854; Sellami *et al.*, 2008; Segers, 1995; Shaltou and Khalil, 2005; Sleem and Hassan, 2010; Soliman, 2006; Wawrik, 1966; Zaghloul, 1985, 1988; Zakaria, 2007; Zakaria and El-Naggar, 2019; Zakaria *et al*., 2007a, 2007b, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c
Equatorial Guinea	Schabetsberger *et al*., 2004
Eritrea	De Ridder, 1984a
Ethiopia	Abera Hirpo, 2021; Ahlstrom, 1940; Akoma, 2010; Akoma *et al*., 2014; Anamunda, 2015; Assefa, 2009; Assefa and Mengistou, 2011; Beyene *et al*., 2022; Brunelli and Cannicci, 1940, 1941; Bryce, 1931; Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Dagne, 2004, 2010; Dagne and Tadesse, 2021; Dagne *et al*., 2008; De Ridder, 1987a, 1991a; Degefu and Schagerl, 2015; Degefu *et al*., 2014; Enawgaw and Lemma, 2018; Fasil *et al*., 2011; Fetahi, 2010; Fetahi and Mengistou, 2012; Fetahi *et al*., 2011; Gebrehiwot, 2020; Getnet *et al*., 2020; Girma, 2011; Tamire, 2006; Green, 1986; Green and Mengestou, 1991; Haileselasie *et al*., 2012; Imoobe and Akoma, 2008; Imoobe and Christopher, 2010; Kahsay *et al*., 2022; Krylov *et al*., 2020a, 2020b; Lemma, 2003a, 2003b; Melack, 1983; Mengestou *et al*., 1991; Mengistou, 2016; Mequanent *et al*., 2022; Merga *et al*., 2020; Mesfin *et al*., 1988; Negassa and Prabu, 2008; Pattnaik, 2014, 2015; Schagerl and Burian, 2016; Segers, 1995; Sendek and Aynalem, 2020; Tamire and Mengistou, 2013; Tariku *et al*., 1997; Wagaw *et al*., 2019, 2022; Wodajo and Belay, 1984; Wondie and Mengistou, 2012; Wondie and Mengistu, 2017
Gambia	Bērziņš, 1957; Segers, 1995
Ghana	De Ridder, 1985b, 1991a; Obeng, 1973; Obeng-Asamoa, 1977; Russell, 1956; Sanful *et al*., 2013, 2017
Guinea	De Ridder, 1991a; Koste and Tobias, 1989

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Tab. 1. Continued from previous page.

Country	Reference
Ivory Coast	Aka *et al*., 2000, 2016; Arfi et al., 1987; Augustin *et al*., 2018; Berté *et al*., 2019; De Beauchamp, 1955; De Ridder, 1984b, 1985b, 1991a; De Ridder and Pourriot, 1984; Diomandé *et al*., 2018; Etilé *et al*., 2009, 2015; Fofana *et al*., 2019, 2020; Monney *et al*., 2015, 2016; N'da *et al.*, 2015; Pagano *et al.*, 2003; Rahm, 1964; Saint-Jean and Pagano, 1987; Soro *et al*., 2019; Yao *et al*., 2015; Yte *et al*., 1983
Kenya	Ahlstrom, 1940; Beadle, 1932; Brunelli and Cannicci, 1940, 1941; Burian, 2010; Burian *et al*., 2013, 2014, 2016; Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Chemoiwa *et al*., 2015; De Beauchamp, 1932a, 1932b; De Ridder, 1987a, 1991a; Epp *et al*., 2010; Finlay *et al*., 1987; Gichuki *et al*., 2006; Gophen, 2015; Gophen *et al*., 1995; Källqvist and Meadows, 1978; Kiggundu *et al*., 2020; Masai *et al*., 2006; Matagi, 2004; Mavuti, 1990, 1992; Mavuti and Litterick, 1980, 1991; Mbogo, 2002; Mengistou, 2016; Meremo *et al*., 2022; Milbrink, 1977; Mills *et al*., 2017; Mironga *et al*., 2014; Murray, 1911c; Mutune *et al*., 2006; Mwashote and Shimbira, 1994; Mwebaza-Ndawula *et al*., 2004; Mwirigi *et al*., 2005; Nogrady, 1983; Ogello *et al*., 2016; Omondi *et al*., 2011; Ong'ondo *et al*., 2013; Owili, 1999; Owili *et al*., 2006; Oyoo-Okoth *et al*., 2011; Okuku *et al.*, 2016; Pejler, 1974; Raini, 2006; Sørensen *et al*., 2005; Schagerl and Burian, 2016; Segers, 1995; Segers *et al*., 1994; Smolak and Walsh, 2022; Stelzer *et al*., 2011; Thomasson, 1965; Uku and Mavuti, 1994; Vareschi, 1978; Vareschi and Jacobs, 1984; Vareschi and Vareschi, 1984; Wakwabi *et al*., 2006; Worthington and Ricardo, 1936
Lesotho	Green, 2001
Libya	Khan, 2010a; Khan and Zarmouh, 1989; Manfredi, 1939
Madagascar	Bērziņš, 1960, 1982; Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Koste, 1996b; Murray, 1908, 1911c; Schabetsberger *et al*., 2009, 2013; Segers, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996
Madeira	Velasco, 1990
Malawi	Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Daday, 1907; De Ridder, 1987a; Hall et al., 1976; Kalk, 1979a, 1979b; Kalk and Schulten-Senden, 1970; Rousselet, 1910; Segers, 1995
Mali	De Ridder, 1987a, 1991a, 1992; Koste and Tobias, 1987, 1989
Mauritania	Coussement and Dumont, 1980; De Ridder, 1987b, 1991a; Sako, 2017; Sako *et al.*, 2019; Segers, 1995
Morocco	Badsi *et al*., 2010; Coussement and Dumont, 1980; Dumont *et al*., 1973; Gee and Duigan, 1993; Ramdani *et al*., 2001; Segers, 1995
Mozambique	Hall *et al*., 1976; Hutchinson *et al*., 1932; Segers, 1995
Namibia	Brain and Koste, 1993; Foissner *et al*., 2002; Koste, 1996a; Rayner *et al*., 1995; Segers, 1995; West, 2016
Niger	Dumont, 2019; Souley Adamou *et al*., 2021, 2022
Nigeria	Abdul *et al*., 2016; Abubakar and Abubakar, 2013; Adadu *et al*., 2019; Adebayo and Ayoade, 2019; Adebayo *et al*., 2021; Adedeji and Adeniyi, 2006; Adedeji *et al*., 2013, 2017, 2019; Adelayo and Ifeanyi, 2019; Adeniyi and Adedeji, 2007; Adeniyi *et al*., 2020; Adesalu *et al*., 2015; Adewumi *et al*., 2012; Adeyemi *et al*., 2009; Adeyemi-Ale *et al*., 2014; Adukwu *et al.*, 2019; Agouru and Audu, 2012; Ajah, 2013; Ajani, 2010; Akin-Oriola, 2003; Akinbuwa and Adeniyi, 1991, 1996; Akindele, 2013; Akindele and Adeniyi, 2013a, 2013b; Akindele and Olutona, 2014; Alagoa *et al*., 2015, 2019; Anago *et al.*, 2013; Anadu *et al*., 1990; Anyanwu *et al*., 2013; 2020, 2021a, 2021b, 2022; Arazu and Ogbeibu, 2017; Arimoro and Oganah, 2010; Asibor and Adeniyi, 2022; Atobatele *et al*., 2007; Ayoade and Aderogba, 2020; Ayodele and Adeniyi, 2006; Bako and Blarabe, 2006; Balogun and Ajani, 2021; Balogun *et al*., 2005; Bamaiyi *et al.*, 2021; Barau *et al*., 2020; Bolawa *et al*., 2018; Bonjoru *et al*., 2020; Bwala *et al.*, 2010; Chris and Amaewhule, 2022; Chukwuka and Uka, 2007; Clarke, 1978; Clarke *et al*., 2013; Damilola, 2013; Dauda *et al*., 2022; Davies, 2009; Davies and Otene, 2009; Davies *et al*., 2009a, 2009b; De Ridder, 1987a, 1991a; Dimowo, 2013; Dirisu *et al*., 2019; Donner and Adeniji, 1977; Echoke *et al.*, 2018; Edegbene *et al*., 2022; Edema *et al*., 2002; Edward and Ugwumba, 2010; Egborge, 1981, 1994; Egborge and Chigbu, 1988; Egborge and Ogbekene, 1986; Egborge and Sagay, 1979; Egborge and Tawari, 1987; Ekpo, 2013; Ekpo *et al*., 2015, 2020, 2022; Ekwu and Sikoki, 2005; Emmanuel and Onyema, 2007; Erhenhi and Omoigberale, 2019; Esenowo *et al*., 2017; Evulobi *et al.*, 2017; Eyo *et al*., 2013; Ezekiel *et al.*, 2011; Fafioye and Omoyinmi, 2006; Green, 1960, 1972a, 1987; Hassan *et al*., 2019; Holden and Green, 1960; Ibemenuga, 2020; Ibrahim, 2009; Ibrahim and Abdullahi, 2008; Ikhuoriah *et al*., 2015; Ikomi *et al*., 2010; Iloba, 2017, 2019; Iloba and Akawo, 2013; Iloba and Arebun, 2020; Iloba and Egborge, 2002; Iloba and Ruejoma, 2014; Imam *et al*., 2011; Imevbore, 1967; Imoobe, 2011a, 2011b; Imoobe and Adeyinka, 2009; Isibor, 2017; James and Ajah, 2021; Jeje and Fernando, 1992; Jonah *et al*., 2020a, 2020b; Joshua *et al*., 2018; Kennie *et al.*, 2017; Khan, 2010b; Khan and Agugo, 1990; Khan and Ejike, 1984; Kigbu *et al.*, 2017; Kolo *et al*., 2010; Kutama *et al*., 2014; Kwen *et al*., 2019; Lawal *et al*., 2016; Maria *et al*., 2022; Mohammed *et al*., 2016, 2019; Murray, 1908; Musa *et al*., 2021; Mustapha, 2009, 2010; Nafi'u and Ibrahim, 2017; Nkwoji *et al*., 2010; Nwabueze, 2015; Nwamaka *et al*., 2016; Nwinyimagu *et al*., 2021; Nwonumara and Idumah, 2019, 2022; Nwonumara and Okogwu, 2013; Nwosu *et al.*, 2013; Obialor and Antai, 2022; Obot *et al*., 2020; Offem *et al*., 2009, 2011; Ogamba *et al*., 2017, 2019; Ogbeibu and Edutie, 2002; Ogbeibu and Osokpor, 2021; Ogbuagu and Ayoade, 2012a, 2012b; Okogwu, 2010; Okogwu and Nwani, 2009; Okogwu and Ugwumba, 2006; Okogwu *et al*., 2010; Okorafor *et al*., 2013; Olaleye and Adedeji, 2005; Olasehinde and Abeke, 2012; Omoboye *et al.*, 2022; Omoigberale and Aikhuele, 2011; Omoigberale and Oransaye, 2011; Omoregie, 2017; Onwudinjo and Egborge, 1994; Onyema and Ojo, 2008; Oparaku *et al*., 2022; Oriakpono, 2018; Otene *et al*., 2019; Ovie and Adeniji, 1994; Ovie and Sarma, 1993; Ovie *et al*., 2011; Rabiu *et al.*, 2011; Segers, 1993, 1995, 1996; Segers *et al*., 1993; Shayebi *et al*., 2020; Solomon *et al*., 2009; Stephen *et al*., 2011; Suleiman *et al.*, 2021; Taiwo, 2014; Tusayi *et al*., 2020; Uka *et al*., 2007; Ukaonu *et al.*, 2017; Usman, 2015; Wanganeo and Kumar, 2020; Wulfert, 1965; Yakup *et al*., 2012; Zabbey *et al*., 2008

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Tab. 1. Continued from previous page.

Country	Reference
Réunion	De Smet, 2006
Rwanda	Ahlstrom, 1940; Damas, 1955; De Beauchamp, 1939; Dumont, 1986; Gillard, 1959; Isumbisho *et al.*, 2006; Isumbisho Mwapu, 2006
Senegal	Bērziņš, 1959; De Ridder, 1983, 1985a, 1987a, 1987b; Kâ et al., 2006, 2011; Segers, 1995
Seychelles	De Ridder, 1991a; Gerlach, 2011; Maas *et al.*, 1994; Segers, 1995
Sierra Leone	Burgis and Symoens, 1987; De Ridder, 1987a; Green, 1979; Segers, 1995
Somalia	Dumont *et al.*, 1994
South Africa	Ahlstrom, 1940, 1943; Bird *et al.*, 2019; Brain *et al.*, 1995; Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Carrasco and Perissinotto, 2012, 2015; Combrink, 1994; De Ridder, 1984c, 1987a, 1991a; Harding and Wright, 1999; Harding *et al.*, 2012; Harrison, 1962; Harrison *et al.*, 1960; Huber-Pestalozzi, 1929; Hutchinson, 1931; Hutchinson *et al.*, 1932; Jarvis, 1987; Jerling, 2005; Kirkman, 1901, 1906; Martin and Cyrus, 1991; Milne, 1916; Mofu *et al.*, 2021; Murray, 1911a, 1911b, 1911c, 1911d; Perissinotto, 1989; Riato *et al.*, 2014; Robarts *et al.*, 1994; Rousselet, 1906; Sartory, 1981a, 1981b; Scharler *et al.*, 2020; Schuurman, 1932; Seaman, 1977; Seaman *et al.*, 1991; Stegmann *et al.*, 1981
South Sudan	Burgis and Symoens, 1987; De Ridder, 1984a; Green, 1984; Green *et al.*, 1979; Monakov, 1969
Sudan	Abdellatif *et al.*, 1993; Abu Gideiri, 1969a, 1969b; Abu Gideiri and Ali, 1975; Abu Gideiri and Yousif, 1974; Bērziņš, 1956; De Ridder, 1981, 1984a, 1987a, 1989, 1991a; El Moghraby, 1972, 1977; Green *et al.*, 1984; Hanna and Schiemer, 1993; Kiggundu *et al.*, 2020; Löffler, 1963; Salem and Mageed, 2021; Tailing and Rzoska, 1967
Tanzania	Ahlstrom, 1940; Bailey *et al.*, 1978; Chande, 2007; Collin, 1897; Cunnington, 1920; Daday, 1907; De Ridder, 1991a; De Smet and Bafort, 1990; Fontaneto *et al.*, 2007; Gillard, 1957; Hamisi *et al.*, 2017; Katunzi *et al.*, 2017; Mwebaza-Ndawula *et al.*, 2004; Narita *et al.*, 1986; Ngupula *et al.*, 2010; Ngupula, 2013; Rousselet, 1910; Segers, 1995; Segers *et al.*, 1996; Thomasson, 1965; Wakwabi *et al.*, 2006; Waya, 2001, 2004; Waya and Chande, 2004; Waya and Mwambungu, 2004; Waya *et al.*, 2017
Tunisia	De Ridder, 1984c; Gómez *et al.*, 2002; Gauthier, 1928; Mills *et al.*, 2017; Ramdani *et al.*, 2001; Sellami *et al.*, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2016
Uganda	Burgis, 1969, 1971; Burgis and Symoens, 1987; Collin, 1898; De Beauchamp, 1932a, 1939; De Ridder, 1991a; Dunn *et al.*, 1969; Green, 1965, 1967, 1972b, 1976, 1987; Jackson, 2004; Kiggundu *et al.*, 2012, 2020; Kizito, 1998; Kizito and Nauwerck, 1995; Magezi *et al.*, 2012; Murray, 1908, 1911c; Mwebaza-Ndawula *et al.*, 2001, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Ndawula and Kiggundu, 2000; Ndawula *et al.*, 2000; Nkambo *et al.*, 2015; Ogutu-Ohwayo and Ndawula, 2000; Pejler, 1974; Ricci, 1980; Rousselet, 1910; Segers, 1995; Ssanyu *et al.*, 2011; Thomasson, 1955; Tibihika *et al.*, 2016; Wakwabi *et al.*, 2006; Waya and Chande, 2004; Worthington and Ricardo, 1936
Western Sahara	Dumont and Coussement, 1976
Zambia	Anamunda and Lamtane, 2022; De Ridder, 1981, 1987a; Gillard, 1957; Hall *et al.*, 1976; Kondo *et al.*, 1997; Rousselet, 1906; Segers, 1995; Thomasson, 1960, 1965, 1980; Wulfert, 1965
Zimbabwe	Anusa *et al.*, 2012; Basima, 2005; Basima *et al.*, 2006; Bird *et al.*, 2019; De Ridder, 1984c, 1991a; Dalu *et al.*, 2013; Elenbaas and Grundel, 1994; Green, 1985, 1987, 1990; Huber-Pestalozzi, 1929; Magadza, 1980; Marshall, 1997; Masundire, 1989, 1992; Mhlanga *et al.*, 2017, 2020; Msiteli-Shumba *et al.*, 2017; Munro, 1966; Ndebele-Murisa, 2011; Nhiwatiwa and Marshall, 2007; Rousselet, 1906; Segers, 1995; Shumba, 2018; Thomasson, 1965, 1980; Utete *et al.*, 2017; Vanschoenwinkel, 2011

Literature search methods: All relevant literature was obtained first by searching through search engines (Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, Zoological Records) with combinations of keywords to identify the target organisms, such as rotifer* or rotatoria or monogonont* or bdelloid* or seison*, and a combination of geographic targets, such as Africa* or the name of all African countries and surrounding islands and archipelagos, including names of former historical countries not existing anymore. Additional references were searched through the grey literature with online searches outside the academic databases. All of the literature found as outcome of these searches was screened for records, and the additional references cited in them were searched and screened too. We do not claim that the checklist is absolutely complete, but that it is the best we could do. The dynamic nature of the GBIF portal online will allow including potentially overlooked records whenever they become available.

Literature list: Of 765 papers found by the literature search, only 706 references contained records of rotifers at least at the family level (Tab. 1). The records reported in four reviews, for the continent (De Ridder, 1986; Dumont, 1983; Smolak *et al.*, 2023) and for a smaller area (Gondwe *et al.*, 2021), were not included, given that they would represent only duplicate records, having gathered data from previous studies already included in our dataset. Unfortunately, we did not have access to 109 papers (Supplementary File SF1) and thus we could not code the data they contained: adding data from these papers may still change the picture of known diversity in Africa and sur-

rounding islands. The other 55 papers mentioned rotifers from Africa, but only at higher taxonomic ranks (Supplementary File SF2).
The literature search was completed with papers published until December 2022.
Quality control for literature data: The search for additional literature was considered completed when no new references could be found in the reference list of the screened papers.

Taxonomic coverage

General description: The dataset covers only animals of the phylum Rotifera in its traditional meaning, with the exclusion of Acanthocephala (Fontaneto and Plewka, 2021).
Taxonomic ranks: Data from variety and subspecies levels to species, genus, and family rank were included in the dataset, whereas records mentioning only higher ranks (e.g., Ploima, Bdelloidea, Monogononta, Rotifera) were excluded.
Taxonomic methods: All names reported in the published literature were included and reported in the column 'originalName'. Given the continuous changes in biological nomenclature (Minelli, 1995), all names were updated to the currently accepted nomenclature, following the Rotifer List of Available Names, LAN (Segers *et al*., 2012), for all scientific names published before year 2000, whereas no update was performed for all scientific names published after that year. For these, we followed the nomenclature of the Rotifer World Catalog (Jersabek and Leitner, 2013). All valid names were updated in the column 'acceptedName' for taxa at species, genus and family level. All *species inquirendae*, *nomina nuda*, and *genera inquirenda* were reported as such in the complete dataset in OSF, but they were not included in the records uploaded to GBIF. The rotifer LAN stabilised nomenclature by performing revision of names with synonyms and delimitation of genera (Segers *et al.*, 2012). All names were also checked against the backbone of GBIF. The dataset we uploaded in GBIF uses only the updated nomenclature, with no mention of the original names reported in the published literature.
Taxon specialists: Diego Fontaneto, Radoslav Smolak, Robert L. Wallace, Elizabeth J. Walsh.
Quality control for taxonomic data: Nomenclature validation and cleaning were based on the rotifer LAN for ac-

Tab. 2. Description of the dataset available in OSF with specific information for each column, relative to definitions, units and storage.

Attribute	Column_name	Description	Units	Attribute Type
ID	ID	Unique number corresponding to specific occurrence		Integer
Kingdom	kingdom	Taxonomic rank below Domain		Text
Phylum	phylum	Taxonomic rank below Kingdom		Text
Class	class	Taxonomic rank below Phylum		Text
Order	order	Taxonomic rank below Class		Text
Family	family	Taxonomic rank below Order		Text
Genus	genus	Taxonomic rank below Family and first element in the Latin binomial name		Text
Specific epithet	specificEpithet	Second element in the Latin binomial name		Text
Infraspecific epithet	infraspecificEpithet	Third element in the Latin trinomial name		Text
Original species name	speciesOriginal	Species name retrieved in the original work		Text
Accepted name	acceptedName	Reviewed species name		Text
Accepted author name	acceptedAuthor	Accepted author associated with "Accepted Name"		Text
Scientific name	scientificName	Binomial nomenclature and authorship		Text
Taxonomic rank	taxonRank	Taxonomic rank information (e.g., genus, species)		Text
Latitude	latitude	Coordinate that specifies the N–S position of a point on the Earth surface	Decimal degrees, WGS84	Numeric
Longitude	longitude	Coordinate that specifies the E–W position of a point on the Earth surface	Decimal degrees, WGS84	Numeric
Administrative country	country	Administrative country		Text
Locality	locality	Particular area where the taxon was found		Text
Habitat	habitat	Habitat where the taxon was found		Text
Reference	reference	Short reference		Text
Administrative country	ADM0_NAME	Standardised administrative country		Text
Continent	Continent	Continent (Africa, Europe)		Text

cepted species and genus names (Segers *et al.*, 2012), on Rotifer World Catalog (Jersabek and Leitner, 2013), and on the taxonomic backbone of GBIF.

Data and code availability

All data and code are available at OSF: https://osf.io/p9b7d/
All data for valid taxa are available at GBIF: https://doi.org/10.15468/ve5ygw

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