

Preface and Acknowledgments

The practical need to partition the world of the viruses into distinguishable, universally agreed upon entities is the ultimate justification for developing a virus classification system. The first internationally organized attempts to introduce some order in the bewildering variety of viruses took place at the International Congress of Microbiology held in Moscow in 1966. A Committee was created, later called The International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) which was given the task of developing a single, universal taxonomic scheme for all the viruses infecting animals (vertebrates, invertebrates and protozoa), plants (higher plants and algae), fungi, bacteria and archaea. Since 1971 the ICTV, operating on behalf of the world community of virologists, has produced the following seven reports describing the current state of virus taxonomy:

ICTV Report	Editors	Reporting ICTV Proceedings at the International Congresses of Virology held in :
The First Report, 1971	P. Wildy	Helsinki, 1968
The Second Report, 1976	F. Fenner	Budapest, 1971 and Madrid, 1975
The Third Report, 1979	R.E.F. Mathews	The Hague, 1978
The Fourth Report, 1982	R.E.F. Mathews	Strasbourg, 1981
The Fifth Report, 1991	R.I.B. Francki, C.M. Fauquet, D.L. Knudson, F. Brown	Sendai, 1984; Edmonton, 1987 and Berlin, 1990
The Sixth Report, 1995	F.A. Murphy, C.M. Fauquet, D.H.L. Bishop, S.A. Ghabrial, A.W. Jarvis, G.P. Martell, M.A. Mayo, M.D. Summers	Glasgow, 1993
The Seventh Report, 2000	M.H.V. van Regenmortel, C.M. Fauquet, D.H.L. Bishop, E.B. Carstens, M.K. Estes, S.M. Lemon, J. Maniloff, M.A. Mayo, D.J. McGeoch, C.R. Pringle, R.B. Wickner	Jerusalem, 1996

The present Eighth Report of the ICTV builds on the accumulated taxonomic construction of its predecessors and records the proceedings of the Committee since 2000, including decisions reached at the eleventh and the twelfth International Congresses of Virology held in Sydney in 1999 and Paris in 2002 respectively, and at mid-term ICTV meetings in 2001, 2002, and 2003.

In 1991, the ICTV agreed that the hierarchical level of species would be defined and added to the categories of genus, subfamily, family and order which were already in use in the universal virus classification system. In this 8th Report, the list of recognized virus species has been further extended and the demarcation criteria used to discriminate between individual virus species in different genera have been spelled out as far as possible. This work is still incomplete and will continue to require the input of the more than 70 Study-Groups who provide the information codified in ICTV Reports. The present Report represents the work of more than 500 virologists world-wide, i.e. the members of the Study Groups, Subcommittees and the Executive Committee of the ICTV. The compilers of the Report wish to express their gratitude to all these virologists.

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