

A NOTE ON THE EXTENSION OF THE DEGREE REFERENCE SYSTEM FOR CITING BIOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION RECORDS
TO NORTH OF EQUATOR AND WEST OF GREENWICH MERIDIAN

The Degree Reference System proposed by Edwards & Jessop (1967) and Edwards & Leistner (1971) has been in general use in South Africa for well over ten years. Attention has recently been drawn to a requirement for extending the System for plotting the distribution of plants for the whole of Africa and for surrounding islands such as Tristan da

Cunha and Marion Island. This means extension to both north of the Equator and west of the Greenwich Meridian, amounting to extension to cover the rest of the earth's surface. Although such an extension was implied by Edwards & Leistner (1971), no formal conventions for doing so were proposed by them. This Note gives a simple procedure for differen-

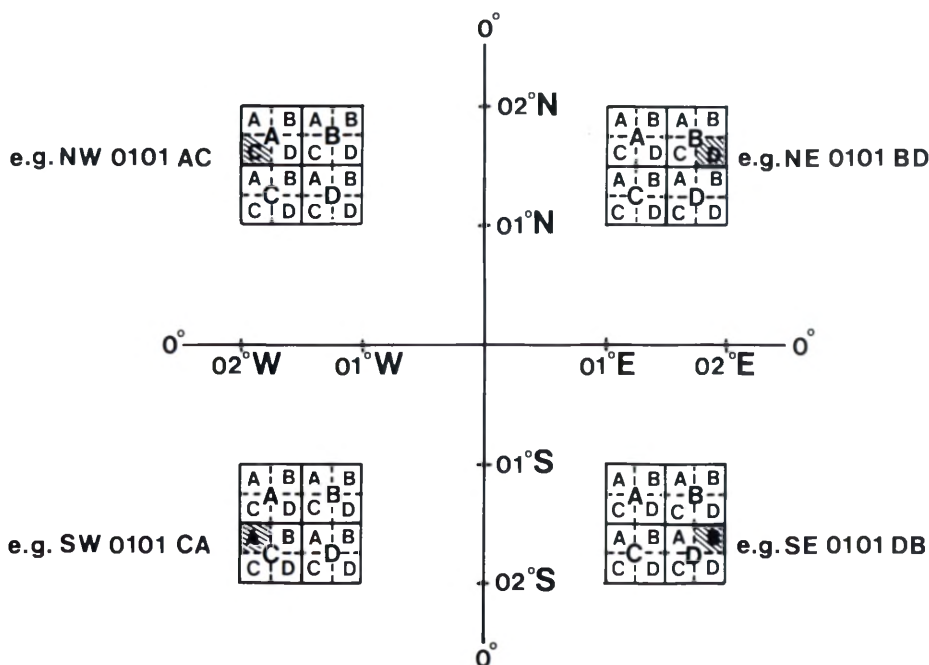


FIG. 5.—Example of numbering for different quadrants north or south of Equator and east or west of Greenwich Meridian.

tiating, when required, between the different quadrants of the earth's surface.

As reported by Edwards & Leistner (1971), since we happen in Africa south of the Equator to be in the south-eastern quarter of the earth's surface in relation to the intersection of 0° latitude and 0° longitude, the degree square is numbered according to the degrees of latitude and longitude, in that order, of the top left hand or north-west corner of the degree square. By extending this principle, degree squares in the north-eastern, north-western and south-western quarters of the earth's surface may be numbered in relation to the point of origin in a way similar to that of the south-eastern quarter, provided the various quarters are identified by prefixing the letters NE, NW, SW and SE to the degree numbers. In other words, the degree squares are numbered just as the latitude and longitude are numbered on a map, with the addition of prefixes indicating N or S of the equator and E or W of Greenwich meridian. This is illustrated in Fig. 5.

If required, subdivision of the degree square is then carried out in exactly the same way as previous-

ly: by subdividing into half-degree squares numbered A, B, C and D, respectively, and each half-degree square being further subdivided into quarter-degree squares, again numbered A, B, C, and D, respectively. This is also illustrated in Fig. 1.

In general, use of the Degree Reference System is therefore similar throughout the world, latitude and longitude numbers being used as found on a map, but with the prefixing of the letters N or S and E or W to indicate, respectively, north or south latitude, and east or west longitude. Subdivisions of a degree square are then made by successive division into half- and quarter-degree squares, which are indicated by the letters A, B, C, and D.

REFERENCES

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