Introduction

This work is an attempt to catalogue all the known species of cicadas (Hemiptera: Cicadoidea) that inhabit continental North America north of Mexico. Because there has been no previous summary work focusing on the cicada fauna of this region, there appears to be considerable confusion as to whether certain species actually inhabit the geographic scope of this study. Once a species has been mistakenly identified from a particular location, subsequent authors perpetuate the error. For example, Poole et al. (1997) state that their list is a reflection of the literature that they did not correct because this was not the goal of the work. They also synonymize all subspecies (varietal) names in their list. We consider this to be unjustifiable, however, because several taxa described as subspecies (varieties) have now been shown to be valid species (Van Duzee 1916; Davis 1930, 1935b; Simons 1953; Heath et al. 1971; Miller 1985; Sanborn and Phillips 2001, 2010, 2011; Sanborn 2009a). Additionally, such comprehensive works usually do not identify individual problems within taxonomic groups; their goal is to list the species that have been reported in a particular geographic area. Another potential problem is the inability to remain current in terms of synonymies and new combinations. Thus, out-of-date or incorrect information is often reiterated. Such works are then used in large-scale studies of biodiversity and in plans for the conservation of species (e.g., Stein et al. 2000). Accurate assessments are needed.

In this book, we catalog the cicada species found within the continental Nearctic region north of Mexico. We have excluded the insular regions of Bermuda and the Bahamas from the study; although there is an endemic cicada on Bermuda (Verrill 1902) and two species of cicadas that inhabit the Bahamas (Sanborn 2001) that are not found in the continent. All synonyms, new combinations, and first occurance of misspellings are listed. Species incorrectly attributed to the region are identified, and the actual distribution of the species stated. We have used the current orthography for each species name unless we have made a specific change (i.e., a new combination from previously published works).

The higher classification system that we used attempts to include the most recent application of taxa within the group and is a synthesis of ideas that have