

Fifteen years of the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS): where are we, and what will the next decade bring?

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In 2022, the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) celebrates its fifteenth anniversary. Over the past 15 years, the content of WoRMS has grown tremendously, as well as its network of volunteer experts and its connection to regional and global initiatives. Last year, WoRMS has been endorsed as a UN Ocean Decade project under the title 'Above and Beyond - Completing the World Register of Marine Species'. During the full span of the Ocean Decade, WoRMS will continue its endeavors to be able to provide a full taxonomic overview of all marine life, thereby not only supporting scientists, but everyone who makes use of species names, including policy makers, industry and the public at large. Although already fairly complete, taxonomic gaps still need to be addressed in space and time. New challenges in the field of taxonomy - such as temporary names - need to be explored, thereby looking for the best suitable solution for all WoRMS users. Other high-level objectives for WoRMS within the Decade include serving as a data rescue platform for other taxonomy databases, encouraging continued documentation of species traits which are of critical importance for ecological marine research and to provide improved support and links with and between other global databases and infrastructures that use a marine taxonomic backbone. As an Ocean Decade Project, WoRMS has been linked to the endorsed Action Programme Marine Life 2030: A Global Integrated Marine Biodiversity Information Management and Forecasting System for Sustainable Development and Conservation, with which close collaboration will happen.