The European Ocean Biodiversity Information System (EurOBIS): your gateway to quality controlled marine biodiversity data

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Large scale marine biodiversity research is fundamental to ocean health. However, marine biodiversity data are often scattered and can be hard to find, access or integrate, turning holistic high-quality research into a challenge.The European Ocean Biodiversity Information System – EurOBIS –, established in 2004, aims at helping to fill this gap in scientific knowledge, by integrating largely scattered marine biodiversity data and making them easily findable and efficiently accessible online. EurOBIS brings together marine and brackish biodiversity data collected within European waters or by European researchers and institutes outside Europe, with a focus on taxonomy and spatio-temporal distribution. However, EurOBIS is not limited to presence/absence data, but is also capable of holding a wide variety of occurrence-related information such as biological quantifications and descriptors (e.g. abundance, biomass, biometrics, life stage, sex), environmental and habitat data or sampling related information. All data undergo openly available and thorough quality control procedures to ensure only high-quality data are offered by EurOBIS. Since 2009, EMODnet Biology uses EurOBIS as its backbone, making the data available through a data portal that offers specific filters and functionalities. In 2014, EurOBIS became part of the LifeWatch Species Information Backbone, where users can run the EurOBIS quality checks on their own data. The EurOBIS database structure and services keep evolving. Soon, new data types such as imagery data and DNA derived data will be available and accessible. Moreover, the implementation of fitness-for-use labels will allow users to query the EurOBIS database based on their area of interest.