

A World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) for use in marine and biodiversity data management

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An authoritative and global register of all marine species is urgently needed to facilitate biological data management and exchange, the integration of ecological and biodiversity data with non-biological ocean data, and to assist taxonomists in describing new species, revisions and correcting past nomenclatural confusion. The exercise of producing this list has added benefits in fostering collaboration between experts at a global scale and maintaining taxonomic expertise. Easy access to the register will allow local ecologists and biologists to use correct taxonomic names, and will encourage addition of overlooked species to the list. This will in turn stimulate a.o. biodiversity science and biogeographical and evolutionary research. This “World Register of Marine Species” (WoRMS) is the logical next step for ocean biodiversity informatics (OBI) to become an everyday and essential supporting infrastructure for the marine sciences, monitoring and environmental management. WoRMS is a standards based, quality controlled, expert validated, open-access infrastructure for research, education, and data and resource management. It builds on experience in developing the European Register of Marine Species and the Ocean Biogeographic Information System, and will collaborate with and contribute to the GBIF’s ECAT and planned Global Names Architecture, Species 2000, the Catalogue of Life, the Ocean Biogeographic Information System, the Encyclopaedia of Life, SeaLifeBase, IOC’s International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange, and related initiatives. Currently, well over 100 world leading taxonomists are contributing towards this World Register of Marine Species. For further details see www.marinespecies.org