

Marine Regions: towards a standard for georeferenced marine names

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Geographic Information Systems have become indispensable tools in managing and displaying marine data. However, a unique georeferenced standard of marine placenames and areas is not available, hampering several marine geographic applications, for example the linking of these locations to databases for integrating data. In order to improve the current situation, the creation of an online available, standard, hierarchical list of geographic names, linked to information and maps of the geographic location of these features, is made available online at www.marineregions.org. The objective of Marine Regions is to improve access and clarity of the different geographic, marine names such as seas, sandbanks, ridges and bays and display univocally the boundaries of marine biogeographic or managerial marine areas. Marine Regions tries to establish for the first time a standardized list of georeferenced marine place names and marine areas. In order to preserve the identity of the marine geographic objects from the database, and to name and locate the geographic resources on the web, we promote the unique persistent Marine Regions Geographic Identifier. At the moment Marine Regions lists and provides geographical information and relations on more than 32,604 place names, representing 25,487 marine geographic places. The number of records is an approximate value based on the database on 15 January 2013. The database contains equally 5,597 polygons of geographic places, 12 marine geographic regional and or global marine classifications and includes the Maritime Boundaries (EEZ) of the world. Marine Regions is managed by the Flanders Marine Institute, with financial support from the Flemish government, the EU Network of Excellence MarBEF, the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) and Lifewatch. We would like to acknowledge all content providers and editors of Marine Regions.