

MASDEA

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The Marine Species Database for Eastern Africa (MASDEA) is a taxonomic database on the species of marine plants and animals found in the Eastern Africa region. After the Rio Conference, and increased awareness on Biodiversity and need for integrated coastal zones management and planning, the gap in knowledge of the marine species of the region became glaring. In spite of the existence of a number of taxonomic databases, there was still a lack of this important information in that: the databases are worldwide and therefore not specific for the region. Furthermore, they cover mainly terrestrial species or are based on specific groups.

The goal of MASDEA is to fill in the gap of knowledge on the taxonomy of marine species in the region and to have a database on all the marine species of this region. Its objectives are as follows:

- collect all available literature on the marine species of the region;
- enter data on the species into the database;
- seek the support of taxonomic experts (of different groups) of the region;
- search for more literature to be entered in the database;
- eventually make the database available to scientists in the region and beyond.

The database is important and has several uses. Useful in conservation that it gives knowledge on the diversity of the species in the region. One can keep track of extinct species and also keep track of old information and literature. Current and valid names as well as synonyms of species are clearly indicated as well as the authority (author who described the species) therefore avoiding confusion. The database can also serve as a repository for new species reports from the region.