
Exploring fish in the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS): how FishBase completes WoRMS and its many sub-registers, providing excellent service to the global marine biodiversity community

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Taxonomy is fundamental to our understanding of marine biodiversity—it underpins research efforts and enables us to track the pace of species discovery and shifts in biodiversity across the world’s oceans. At the core of this work is the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), a dynamic and authoritative resource that offers a comprehensive list of marine species names, along with synonymy and taxonomic details. Recognized internationally as the standard reference for marine taxonomy, WoRMS offers consistent and reliable knowledge of marine taxon names.

The World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) was established in 2007 and is a global, open-access inventory of names of marine taxa. WoRMS is managed within Aphia, an infrastructure designed to capture taxonomic and related data as well as information, and includes an online editing environment. Through this editing environment, experts can update and maintain the content of the database in a timely fashion. A network of more than 450 editors across the globe is helping to keep the content of WoRMS up to date.

As long as WoRMS has existed, there has been a collaboration with FishBase, where synchronization is performed on a regular basis, making sure that the FishBase content is represented in WoRMS as accurately as possible. Over the years, a close connection with SeaLifeBase has been developed, also here with the goal of offering rich information but avoiding duplication of efforts between the data systems.

Without a doubt, FishBase (FB) and SeaLifeBase (SLB) have successful platforms, strong user- and expert communities and excellent communication channels. Sharing part of their content through the World Register of Marine Species gives them even a broader impact and visibility, as they become part of an even more global picture. The data and information from FishBase and SeaLifeBase are indispensable: it is part not only of WoRMS, but also of its many related regional and thematic registers. By including FB and SLB, each of these registers becomes more complete and more impactful, all in a spirit of joint, open collaboration.

This talk will not only highlight the overall collaboration between WoRMS, FB and SLB. It will also focus on the impact of their joint efforts, from a WoRMS editor and user perspective.