

Improving the interoperability and public availability of aquatic taxonomic species registers

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The use of organism names is ubiquitous in a wide range of scientific and policy domains. Specialist taxonomic databases and tools to query these data are essential for ensuring the quality of biological data from collection and generation to data management. Species information systems - e.g. for monitoring biodiversity status and trends - and those dealing with policy concerns benefit from such high quality tools and databases ensuring the interoperability of the data. The World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), the Register of Antarctic Marine Species (RAMS) and the Freshwater Animal Diversity Assessment (FADA) database are three major Global Species Directories hosted in Belgium. They consist of authoritative taxonomic data curated by international experts and contribute to several European and global initiatives. Given the potential overlap in taxonomic specialists and the complex nature of the data, exchanging expertise and data among these initiatives is highly beneficial for all parties involved. Through the Life-Watch and AquaRES projects, the interoperability and public availability of these aquatic species databases is being ensured and enhanced. Tools and services are guaranteeing the automatic and timely exchange of data between WoRMS, RAMS and FADA, but also expose the data for use in other initiatives and applications.