GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY

free and open access to biodiversity data

GBits

no. 33 Mar 2013

Brazil surveys data holdings

The new national biodiversity information system for Brazil, SiBBr, has launched a survey of the data on biodiversity and ecosystems held by more than 200 institutions in the country.

The survey, carried out online through the website www. sibbr.gov.br, will also assess the informatics infrastructure of potential partners in the system, including universities, research centres and other scientific bodies.

SiBBr

SISTEMA DE INFORMAÇÃO SOBRE A BIODIVERSIDADE BRASILEIRA

SiBBr aims to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem data from diverse sources and make them available for research and policy formulation in Brazil. One of its principal partners, the National Centre of Scientific Computing (LNCC) also hosts the GBIF national node.

Read full story...

SCIENCE AND POLICY

As usual, recent uses of GBIF-mediated data are summarized in the GBits Science Supplement, which can be downloaded here. The current issue highlights research on projections for spread of a highly-allergenic invasive plant in Europe, on the impact of climate change on threatened fish species in United Kingdom waters, and on modelling the range of a rare bird species in Mexico.

To subscribe to the newsletter, please contact info@gbif.org

GBits

CAPACITY BUILDING

GBIF Japan trains Indonesian node in data publishing

Professionals from various agencies in Indonesia have become more familiar with the tools available to provide access to the country's biodiversity data, thanks to a mentoring project involving GBIF Japan.

Seventy participants took part in a workshop on integrated management of biodiversity data held in February in Cibinong, Indonesia, to introduce GBIF infrastructure, tools and standards. The participants were from the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Planning Agency, the Ministry of Research and Technology, and various research centres of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) which hosts the GBIF national node.

The workshop is part of the mentoring project in which GBIF Japan is helping LIPI establish a network for the management of biodiversity information in Indonesia. It is one of three projects approved under the 2012 GBIF mentoring programme, which brings together Participant nodes to share expertise.

Boost for biodiversity informatics capacity in Southern Africa

A new agreement in South Africa should help to build much-needed skills in managing information about biodiversity in the region.

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), which hosts the GBIF national node, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to underpin development of a post-graduate research hub for biodiversity information management.

The MoU is a step towards the longer-term goal of a Southern African Centre of Excellence, aiming to meet a desperate need for research and skills in the field, especially among African countries that are making increased efforts to understand and monitor biodiversity.

Among the fruits of the collaboration are two post-doctoral fellowships. Each is funded by SANBI and based at UWC.

The GBIF nodes in Africa have identified development of research priorities and a curriculum for biodiversity information management as key issues for the region, and this is expected to be a focus of the Africa regional meeting from 16-18 April.

AROUND THE NETWORK

Data portal on algae and protozoa launched

The Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem (BGBM), which coordinates the GBIF nodes in Germany, has launched a new special interest data portal on algae and protozoa.

The portal uses BioCASe (Biological Collection Access Service) portal software and provides access to 7.4 million observation and specimen records published through the GBIF network. The portal enriches the records with additional information, including images, not currently displayed in the GBIF data portal.

Photosynthetic algae and heterotrophic protozoa play a key role in many ecosystems and habitats. They form a wide range of diverse taxonomic groups, morphologies and life forms, ranging from microscopic cells in soils, ponds and lakes to kelps in oceans.

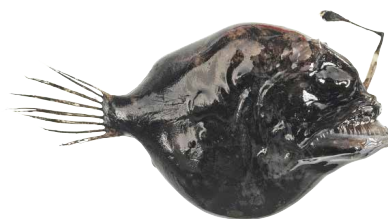The data portal was set up with funds from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. It can be accessed at http://protists.gbif.de/protists/

For details, please contact gbif-d@bgbm.org

So many fish, one great map – ALA launches FishMap

Australia's marine fish species are now at your fingertips thanks to FishMap, launched in February by the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA), the GBIF node in the country.

FishMap is a free online mapping tool that allows users to find out which fish occur at any location or depth in the waters of Australia's continental shelf and slope. Users can also create species lists for any region, with photographs and illustrations, distribution maps and current scientific and common names.

The tool, which includes stunning images, provides the geographical and depth ranges of more than 4500 species, including 320 sharks and rays, based on expert knowledge.
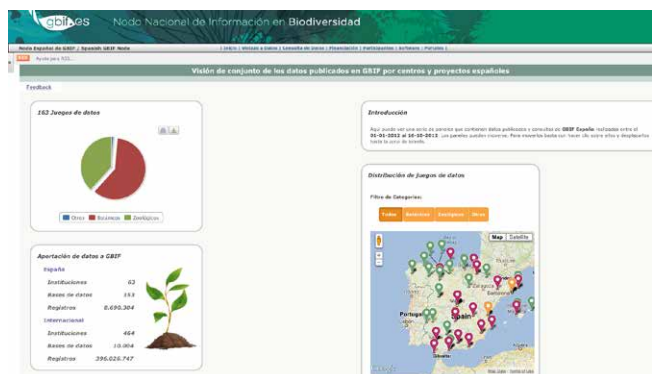
Rough Dreamer (*Oneirodes sabex*) from FishMap

FishMap can be accessed at http://fish.ala.org.au.

Dashboard provides data overview on GBIF.es

Users of GBIF Spain's website can now see at a glance a summary of the biodiversity data being published from the country's institutions. A new dashboard feature includes information such as the leading publishers, types and numbers of records, location of collections and trends in data publication and usage.

NEW DATA

Colombia

Since the last issue of GBits, Colombia has published twenty-five biodiversity datasets from seven institutions, comprising nearly 100,000 records.

The datasets include:
- ants, birds and plants surveyed in coffee plantations, published by the National Federation of Coffee Growers in Colombia;
- vertebrate fauna from surveys of two energy production centres, published by the utility company ISAGEN;
- more than 30,000 insect records from the entomological collection of Universidad del Valle, the third largest university in Colombia;
- ferns and fauna recorded by Corantoquia, the body responsible for managing natural resources in the Antoquia department of Colombia; and
- reptiles, amphibians and plants published from the collections of Universidad de la Salle in Bogotá.

Chinese Taipei/Taiwan

The Taiwan Biodiversity Information Facility, TaiBIF, has published data recording more than 600 fish species from a four-year survey of the coastal waters around the island.

The survey was the largest-ever study of bottom-dwelling fish in the region. It collected data on fish caught by trawlers between 2000 and 2003, and aimed to evaluate the impact of a ban on trawling within three nautical miles of the shoreline, which came into force in 1989. As part of the survey, fish specimens collected from trawling were counted and their body weight measured.

This dataset of 3529 records, covering 631 fish species, was the subject of a data paper published in ZooKeys journal. It used the workflow enabling researchers to generate manuscripts for academic journals at the same time they author the metadata associated with a dataset using GBIF publishing software.

The data paper can be found at http://www.pensoft.net/journals/zookeys/article/3032/abstract/a-dataset-from-bottom-trawl-survey-around-taiwan, and the data can be viewed through the GBIF portal at http://data.gbif.org/datasets/resource/14682/.

Netherlands

The Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden, which holds the fifth largest natural history collection in the world, has published nearly a million records of molluscs, beetles, moths, butterflies, sawflies, wasps, bees and ants. Data come from specimens held at the Naturalis museum.

Spain

GBIF Spain has published more than half a million georeferenced plant records from the Third National Forest Inventory (IFN3), conducted by the Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs from 1997 to 2006. The data, covering 326 species, were gathered from fieldwork throughout mainland Spain, the Balearic and Canary Islands.

Norway

The Norwegian Institute for Nature Research has published over 87,000 records of 1,100 aquatic species found in Norway, including water beetles, water fleas, plankton and molluscs.

United Kingdom

The UK National Biodiversity Network, which acts as the GBIF national node, has published 18 datasets with a total of 25,000 records. Most of the data were gathered from surveys, and include records for lichen, plants, moths and micro-moths, ladybirds, grasshoppers and crickets, wood grouse, water voles, otters and gwyniad – a freshwater fish native to Bala Lake in North Wales.

United States

The Emporia State University, in Kansas, has published over 17,000 records of North American flora from its herbarium. The collection specializes in native regional plants, especially species associated with the remaining tallgrass prairie of the Flint Hills of Kansas. The data were published through the VertNet data network.

GBits

Canada

McGill University, located in Montreal, Canada, has published over a [quarter million records of insect and spider specimens](#) in its Lyman Entomological Museum. Data were published through the Canadensys data network.

INFORMATICS

User feedback invited on GBIF platform

GBits readers are invited to explore and 'test drive' a prototype platform for collaborative development and maintenance of vocabularies for biodiversity informatics.

The GBIF Terminology Platform, http://terms.gbif.org, is based on [MediaWiki](#), the open source wiki engine that underpins Wikipedia, and uses the [Semantic MediaWiki](#) extension. This allows data items to be tagged and queried within the wiki pages.

The prototype is currently populated with a number of [vocabularies](#) including Darwin Core and Audubon Core. Feedback is sought on ease-of-use, general usefulness, and suggestions for enhancement. Please try out the platform and report back on your experience via the [GBIF community site](#).

You will need to create an account on the GBIF community site if you want to edit the platform – then you can comment directly in the discussion associated with each wiki page.

Development of the terminology platform was funded by the European Union [ViBRANT](#) project, through which GBIF collaborated with the Julius-Kühn Institut in Berlin.

For further information, and to submit feedback, please contact:
Éamonn Ó Tuama (eotuama@gbif.org)
Dag Endresen (dag.endresen@nhm.uio.no)
Gregor Hagedorn (g.m.hagedorn@gmail.com)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Meetings and workshops

African regional nodes meeting
16-18 April 2013, Pretoria, South Africa

2nd OpenUp! Annual Meeting
24-26 April 2013, Prague, Czech Republic
[More information…](#)

Pro-iBiosphere meetings
21-23 May 2013, Berlin, Germany
[More information…](#)

Training events

Workshop on biodiversity information for environmental conservation by I3B
15-18 April 2013, Sarapiquí, Costa Rica
[More information…](#)

Training course in Biodiversity information - session 2013, by RMCA
3-28 June 2013, Tervuren, Belgium
[More information…](#)

VertNet Biodiversity Informatics Training Workshop II
24-28 June 2013, Boulder, United States of America
[More information…](#)