



World Register of Marine Species: Steering Committee meeting

Virtual meeting – 13h (GMT+1), duration: 2 hours
14 December 2016

Participants:

Tammy Horton, Andreas Kroh, Nicolas Bailly, Nicole Boury-Esnault, Simone N. Brandão, Mark Costello, Serge Gofas, Gustav Paulay, Gary Poore, Gary Rosenberg, Sabine Stöhr, Leen Vandepitte, Bart Vanhoorne, Sofie Vranken

Apologies for absence: Jan Mees, Francisco Hernandez, Wim Decock, Stefanie Dekeyzer

This was the second virtual WoRMS SC meeting. As with the first virtual meeting, it was decided to keep the duration of the meeting limited to 2 hours due to the many different time zones.

List of action points from previous meetings

A list of action points of all the previous SC meetings was circulated before the meeting by the DMT. For each action item, it was indicated whether this had been done, was in progress, or was still on the 'to-do' list.

Tammy Horton went through all action points, and comments and additional information was provided where necessary.

With regard to DiatomBase, it was mentioned that Marina Potapova should be involved. The DMT informed the SC that Marina is already on the list of potential future editors and that she will be invited to the upcoming Diatombase workshop (March 2017, in Prague).

In relation to the Ostracoda situation with Eugen Kempf, Simone mentioned that she has been approached by Renate Matzke-Karasz & Finn Vieberg, to take part in a meeting. Tammy Horton has asked Simone to keep both the Steering Committee and the Data Management Team updated on this communication.

ACTIONS

- Everyone to keep track of action points from previous meetings
- Simone to keep SC & DMT informed on Ostracoda communication with Renate & Finn

WoRMS editor award

Gustav Paulay has volunteered to take over the responsibility for this topic from Michelle Klautau. He is now the Chair of the Award Jury.

Last year, the jury consisted of 5 people: the Chair (Michelle Klautau), Noa Shenkar, Christopher Boyko, Tina Molodtsova & Nicolas Bailly. Frederic Sinniger was appointed as a 'reserve' jury member, in case there would be any conflicts of interest. All these people were selected from a pool of candidates from the Editorial Board. Two additional candidates were thanked by Geoff Boxshall for their offer to help.

The SC decided that these people should be contacted by Gustav, to check if they would be willing to serve another year as jury member. If some would decline, then new jury members should be identified, to keep the number to 5+1 reserve.

The DMT will provide all necessary information on the Editor Award to Gustav, so he can send out the announcement & request for nominations in January.

ACTIONS:

- Gustav Paulay to check with current Jury members if they are willing to serve again (Dec-Jan)
- DMT to send all relevant information to Gustav (Dec)
- Gustav to send out request for jury members (if needed) (early January)
- Gustav to send out announcement & request for nominations (late January)
- DMT to put news message on WoRMS website
- Jury to decide on awardee by April 2017
- Andreas Kroh to print the new Award (April-May 2017)
- Check for opportunity to hand over Award personally by a SC or DMT member

Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

After the new SC elections, Andreas Kroh has volunteered to collaborate with Francisco Hernandez (DMT) on the Memoranda of Understanding.

The goal is to renegotiate/renew the existing MoUs for EoL, GBIF & CoL and to deal with newly requested MoUs.

Andreas reported that the MoU with Netaxia had been finalized and sent to Netaxia, but no reply was received yet at the time of the SC meeting.

Last week, a signed copy has been received from Netaxia, allowing the SC and VLIZ to formalize this MoU.

It was acknowledged that several formats of MoUs should exist, depending on the requested relation with WoRMS (e.g. from WoRMS to third party should be different MoU than 2-way data exchange between WoRMS & third party).

ACTIONS

- Renegotiate/renew the existing MoUs

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

A DOI has been assigned to WoRMS, and it has been included in the citation.

The SC suggested that all responsible editors of Global, Regional and Thematic Species Databases are contacted to check whether they are interested in assigning a DOI to their register. The DMT will take on this task, and informed the SC that additional metadata for each Register will need to be provided by the editors, to accommodate to the DOI request requirements.

ACTIONS

- DMT to check with GSD, RSD & TSD responsables if they would like to receive a DOI

Distributions working group – report of first meeting

The report of the first virtual meeting of the Distributions working group was circulated to the SC prior to this meeting.

Serge Gofas reported on the meeting, and thanked Gary Poore for his additional input on the matter of type localities. It was suggested that the type locality should be represented as “X contains type locality”, to compensate for the less detailed information at this level based on the geo-units.

It was agreed that country information should be translated to sea-areas, although it is recognized that this is not a straightforward task. Automatic translation is e.g. not possible in many cases (e.g. fossils & countries that are bordering more than 1 sea area). Gary Poore pointed to the Australian Faunal Directory (AFD), where they already solved the issue WoRMS is dealing with.

It was agreed that a section would be added to the manual on how to enter type localities.

The DMT suggested to wait for the new web lay-out before continuing these discussions, as the rearranging of information might already solve (part of) the problem.

The difference between OBIS and WoRMS was discussed. It was suggested that point data from OBIS would be translated to general sea areas and added automatically to WoRMS. This was however rejected, as editors would have to be able to first check this and this would take a great amount of time. It was however agreed that the overlay of WoRMS and OBIS (in WoRMS) should be enhanced and that discussions with OBIS should be started to see if a feedback mechanism from WoRMS to OBIS can be set up.

ACTIONS

- Tammy & Serge to include section on type localities into the editor guidelines (early 2017)
- DMT to enhance the overlay between WoRMS & OBIS on the WoRMS pages (will be tackled with new lay-out)
- DMT to discuss possible feedback mechanism from WoRMS to OBIS for distributions (at next OBIS SG meeting, February 2017)

Images working group - status

Serge Gofas elaborated on the document that was sent to the SC earlier, explaining this can be the basis for future discussions. Tammy stressed that the working group is really necessary, and the agreed procedures should be followed (e.g. call for volunteers within editorial board). This group should have its discussions offline (outside of the SC) and report back to the SC on its 6-monthly meetings. It was suggested that some large providers should become part of this discussion group.

The main issue remains that providers want their images shown on the taxon pages. A solution to this is to implement quality flags on the level of images, as is done for other information.

It was discussed that editors should get the choice to 'trust' specific image providers for their group or not. Names of photographers should be sent to the editors, so they can decide this on a person-by-person basis.

It was suggested that we look at the images available in Encyclopedia of Life (EoL), as they seem to be a rich source, but will probably need some extra checking.

Gustav Paulay volunteered to become part of the image working group.

Gary Rosenberg suggested that the image gallery is reorganized, so it contains more detail. E.g. folders per family (or higher level), specifically for very species-rich phyla or classes. This should give a better overview of what is available and make it easier to verify identifications.

ACTIONS

- Serge Gofas to follow up on the previously agreed action points for the image working group (early 2017)
- DMT to check reorganization of the image gallery
- DMT to provide list of image providers to the SC and the editorial board, to see which providers (for which groups) can be put as 'trusted'.

Editor Guidelines document – status

Tammy Horton circulated version 8 of the editor guidelines prior to the meeting. The final comments and remarks will be integrated, and the document will then be sent to the editorial board for final feedback. Gary Poore has offered to provide input for an additional section on type locality information and to involve DMT in inclusion of necessary new data fields. There is a strong consensus that this needs to be finalized rather soon, and be published as a scientific paper.

ACTIONS

- Gary Poore to provide additional text on type localities
- Tammy & Serge to finalize the document
- Tammy to circulate the document to the editorial board for feedback

'Aristotle and marine biodiversity' communication effort – status/feedback

During an earlier SC meeting, it was agreed that efforts should be made to have one larger communication action on WoRMS per year.

This year, the idea was raised to work together with prof. Eleni Voultziadou, expert on Aristotle and his link with marine biodiversity. A series of 5 news messages were made in collaboration with Eleni, LifeWatch Greece, LifeWatch Belgium and the WoRMS DMT, linking Aristotle his work to the data systems that are currently existing and in use in the LifeWatch project.

All texts were sent to the SC prior to going online, to allow for (factual) feedback. The news messages were planned to go live on Thursday, December 15th 2016.

All stories are available through <http://www.lifewatch.be/en/2016-news-aristotle>.

2017: WoRMS – 10 years

In 2017, WoRMS will exist 10 years. The SC agreed that this needs to be celebrated. Several suggestions have been made, including the development of a new logo (keeping the acronym), publish on WoRMS in a popular science magazine and publish two peer-reviewed papers: a technical one and a more scientific one, perhaps similar to 'the magnitude of global marine species diversity' paper that was published in Current Biology in 2012.

All editors should be informed that 2017 is the 10th birthday of WoRMS and what the plans for 2017 are.

Other suggestions by the SC were related to publishing a printed version of the WoRMS checklist or publish a full list until family-level, and then include statistics on the genera & species. It was argued that a paper publication increases the citability of the WoRMS work, and that it is an incentive for editors to quality check and update their own list. The general viewpoint was however that publishing a checklist is not what helps researchers in building their career. An analysis paper (e.g. a follow-up on the Magnitude paper) would be more valuable.

The SC has asked the DMT to check in which month of 2007 WoRMS was launched. This can however not be retrieved. Therefore, the DMT suggests to combine all actions (new web lay-out & communication efforts) in the autumn of 2017. This should give ample time to prepare for everything.

ACTIONS

- DMT to inform editors on WoRMS 10 year celebration (January 2017)
- DMT to check for new logo (February 2017)
- DMT to organize the initiation of the 3 proposed papers, in close collaboration with the SC

IRMNG – status report

The SC requested an update on the Interim Register of Marine & Non-marine Genera (IRMNG), the database which was recently transferred to VLIZ.

A first update from WoRMS to IRMNG has been made in the second half of 2016. This resulted in 2.281 genera added to IRMNG from WoRMS. In addition, 43.291 IRMNG genera were updated based

on WoRMS information (higher classification, status, authority, environment flags) and a total of 71.132 deep links were made from IRMNG to WoRMS.

In a next step (planned for 2017), all IRMNG genera – which are flagged as marine and are not available in WoRMS – will be sent to the WoRMS editors for checking and updating.

ACTIONS

- DMT to send marine IRMNG names missing from WoRMS to WoRMS editors (2017)

Reporting from DMT - highlights

The DMT will compile an annual overview of all its activities of 2016 in the course of January. This document will be sent to the SC and editorial board and will also be made available online.

Prior to this full report, the DMT has reported on some of its major activities and plans for 2016-2017.

Environment gap nearly closed

Completing the environment information for all WoRMS accepted species has been put forward as a major priority by the SC. Starting in March 2015, the DMT has undertaken several actions to fill this gap, either based on own initiative (for groups without editor or where editor indicated that DMT could do this) or in collaboration with the editor.

The initial gap concerned 102.387 accepted species (=March 2015). This number has now been brought back to:

- 3.812 accepted species (available to all users, including fossils) (on 20th December 2016)
- 20.737 accepted species in quarantine

The remaining gap is still seen as a priority by the DMT, but retrieving information for these remaining species is hard, as the environment cannot always be easily extracted from the available literature (e.g. Bacteria or for fossil species).

LifeWatch: 4 editor workshops in first half of 2017

Through LifeWatch, we are able to fund 4 editor workshops between January-June 2017:

- DiatomBase: 20-22 March, Prague. Back2back with 11th Central European Diatom Meeting. Responsible: Patrick Kociolek.
- Nemertea: 24-26 April, Oostende (VLIZ). Responsible: Malin Strand .
- Parasites: 24-26 April, Oostende (VLIZ). Responsible: Shamsi Shokoofeh.
- AnnelidaBase: 22-24 May, Oostende (VLIZ). Responsible: Geoff Read

All information on these workshops will also become available on the WoRMS activities page:

<http://www.marinespecies.org/activities.php>.

Next gap-focus: original descriptions

The DMT informed the SC that – starting from 2017 – a major focus will be put on documenting the original descriptions of WoRMS species.

The SC pointed out that – together with this exercise – attention should also be paid to documenting the original name of each species and that this is more important than the original description.

The SC formulated a priority list for this task:

1. Link the original name
2. Add reference of the original description
3. Make pdf of original description available

In addition, the importance of documenting the type locality was stressed; it was suggested that this information should be added together with the addition of the original description, as this information can be retrieved from there. It was pointed out that this is not only important from the WoRMS point-of-view, but has also been mentioned as a high priority on other occasions and meetings where representatives of several taxonomic databases were present.

ACTIONS

- DMT to provide overview of stats on completeness of original name, original description and availability of pdfs of original descriptions

Any other business

The SC requested an update on the link between OBIS and WoRMS, more specifically on the non-matching names and how this process is currently working.

The DMT explained that the processing of non-matching names was discontinued for about a year, due to a change in staff within the DMT. All feedback however from the previous communications to the WoRMS Editorial Board have been processed and this has resulted in many additions to WoRMS, particularly of old names. The DMT has kept track of all feedback, which will avoid that the same name will be sent to the editor again in a next phase.

The non-matching has been picked up by Sofie Vranken (DMT) since summer 2016, and her first focus was on the non-matching names of an OBIS harvest of April 2016, containing 5.657 non-matching names. 26% of these names were solved quite easily. The remaining 74% is a mixture between non-marine names, non-sense names and possible marine names. The non-marine and non-sense names will be sent back to the original data providers, whereas we will initiate a mailing to the WoRMS editors for the possible marine names. This will be done in the first half of 2017.