

Necrológica / *Obituary*

FRANK AINLEY BISBY 1945 - 2011*

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On the evening of 25 October the field of taxonomy and biodiversity informatics has lost one of its most prominent champions. Frank Bisby suddenly died at the age of 66. Although officially (reluctantly) retired and planning his succession, Frank was still very much in the middle of things. He was leading a challenging EC funded e-infrastructure project, and closely involved in several others.

Frank's name will forever be tied to Species 2000 and the Catalogue of Life. This validated index of the world's species was his dream, his ultimate goal in life for which he worked incredibly hard, and traveled the world at an unbelievable pace. He relentlessly pointed out its concepts to the scientific community and with success. He was convincing in his views; he made his dream our dream. Together we



forged a global federation of independent organizations, each with a unique and valuable contribution to a single jointly-owned product that now is consulted by millions of users yearly and forms the backbone of many regional, national, and international biodiversity information systems. Almost completed, the Catalogue of Life counts 1.4 million validated species names in a single list, created from the input of over 100 providing databases. 16 years of hard work, crowned with success. Frank put taxonomy firmly on the digital map, and demonstrated that there is a clear need and a market for it.

The Catalogue of Life is a product of many people. Taxonomists all over the world labor on constructing and updating their unique databases, a job often underestimated and undervalued. They

* On behalf of the Board of Directors of Species 2000

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provide the core of it. Others contributed, just as important, with computer science, organization or management skills, legal advice, product development, and outreach. In the past 15 years Frank created an international multidisciplinary family of contributors and collaborators who strongly believed in their shared cause. He was very proud and very fond of this family.

Despite the incredible number of hours he put in Species 2000 and the Catalogue of Life, Frank still managed to fit in teaching. He always remained close to biology. He loved doing botanical field courses with students and was a walking encyclopedia on legumes. He adored his cottage in the countryside with his apple varieties.

We had the privilege to work closely with Frank for over 16 years. We have never met a man so driven, so committed. His work was his life. These were turbulent years, sometimes difficult but

always challenging, interesting and rewarding. We did not always agree, but I respected and admired him. The world has lost a great mind; we have lost a good and dear friend. He will be missed and remembered.

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