10 years of the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS): where do we stand & where are we heading?

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The World Register of Marine Species aims to provide the most authoritative list of names of all marine species, ever published through a freely available online portal.

In 2017, WoRMS celebrated its 10th anniversary. This was an excellent opportunity to both look backward and forward, by analyzing how the system has grown, how it is used and how it can be improved in the future.

Although there are more than 240,000 accepted marine species available through WoRMS, an analysis of editor activity shows that there are still many species names missing from the system, and that this does not only concern recently published species. Each year, an average of 38000 marine species names are added to WoRMS – compared to the on average 2000 newly described marine species per year.

An actively collaborating editor community and Data Management Team are indispensable in keeping a database like WoRMS alive, and mean that WoRMS is now regarded as the standard marine species taxonomic backbone for numerous other initiative such as NCBI Genbank, BOLD, CoL, EOL, GBIF and OBIS. Funding to keep WoRMS going currently is provided through the LifeWatch project. WoRMS constitutes a major contribution to the LifeWatch Taxonomic Backbone.

Keywords:
taxonomy, marine biodiversity, database, LifeWatch

Short description:
An overview of the progress made in the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), in light of its tenth anniversary.

Theme:
Biodiversity tools & data – session 6: bioinformatics and data access
(all themes on http://www.wcmb2018.org/guidelines.html)

Presentation format:
Oral presentation