World Register of Marine Species

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The aim of a World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) is to provide an authoritative and comprehensive list of names of marine organisms, including information on synonymy. While highest priority goes to valid names, other names in use are included so that this register can serve as a guide to interpret taxonomic literature.

The content of WoRMS is controlled by taxonomic experts, not by database managers. WoRMS has an editorial management system where each taxonomic group is represented by an expert who has the authority over the content, and is responsible for controlling the quality of the information. Each of these main taxonomic editors can invite several specialists of smaller groups within their area of responsibility to join them.

The system also contains valid species names, synonyms and vernacular names, and extra information such as literature and biogeographic data. Besides species names, WoRMS also contains the higher classification in which each scientific name is linked to its parent taxon. The classification used is a 'compromise' between established systems and recent changes. Its aim is to aid data management, rather than suggest any taxonomic or phylogenetic opinion on species relationships.

WoRMS is accepted as an international standard for marine taxonomic information and is imbedded in a lot of European and international initiatives such as e.g. LifeWatch, EMODnet, (Eur)OBIS and GBIF.

We will demonstrate the WoRMS web portal and all its functionalities, such as e.g. the web-based services to perform taxonomic data quality control, by matching your own species list with the standard list available in WoRMS. Using the web service makes it possible for the user to access the most recent and up-to-date information.

More information:

- www.marinespecies.org
- Appeltans *et al.* 2012. The magnitude of Global Marine Species Diversity. Current Biology 22(23):2189-2202. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2012.09.036