

GBIF Recommendation on Exchange of Information

Background: Due to the immense potential of 'virtual collections' to enhance scientific knowledge and improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, Parties to international treaties like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have repeatedly emphasised the importance of repatriation of information to countries of origin (e.g. CBD Art. 17 paragraph 2); and decisions CBD COP III/10 and COP IV/1.D have stressed the role that scientific institutions - particularly in the developed world - can play in mobilising these data.

Recommendation: Based on the Open Access recommendation adopted by the GBIF GB11, the GBIF Governing Board adopts the following two resolutions on mobilising biodiversity data and sharing data with countries of origin:

1. The GBIF Governing Board recommends that natural history institutions housing biodiversity materials from other countries:
 - Ensure that species and specimen-level data and associated metadata be digitised and made openly and publicly available through mechanisms cooperating with GBIF.
2. The GBIF Governing Board recommends that research organisations, research councils, governmental, non-governmental organisations, international agencies, funding agencies and private foundations around the world:
 - Provide funding for research, capacity building, training and other relevant activities that include the digitisation and open dissemination of species and specimen-level data collected beyond their national territories, in accordance with GBIF-mediated standards and protocols.

To see the GBIF data currently available for your country, visit www.gbif.org, and click on



Eschscholtzia californica Cham.
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GBIF and Data
Repatriation to
Countries of Origin
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GLOBAL
BIODIVERSITY
INFORMATION
FACILITY
www.gbif.org

Secretariat
Universitetsparken 15
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø
Denmark

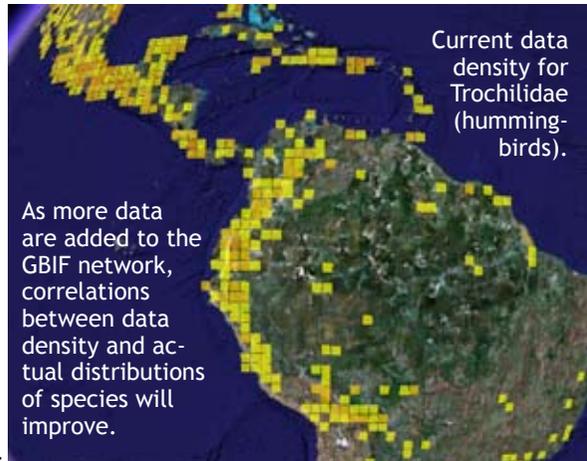
Tel.: +45 35 32 14 70
Fax: +45 35 32 14 80
Email: info@gbif.org

It is well known that the greatest concentrations of biodiversity are found in developing countries, but most of the data and information about it is located in developed countries (large map).

GBIF was brought into existence largely to help redress this asymmetry with regard to data about where species occur and about scientific names. The GBIF data portal can help countries of origin find sources of these types of data.

Countries have, through GBIF, quick and easy access to data about their own biodiversity (see map) served by institutions around the world. The data can be used to form and analyse new hypotheses, in education, and in decision-making about in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In practice, "electronic consultation" with GBIF will translate into savings of time, funds and resources.

Data providers currently connected to the GBIF network have made ~ 125 million records freely and openly available. As of this writing (June, 2007) the new GBIF data portal www.gbif.org provides tools that already work directly with ~ 70 million of these records, with more being connected weekly.



However, there are hundreds of millions of records in the world that could greatly increase the power of the GBIF system if they were digitised. Digitising these data would help ensure that those data were also repatriated.

The new GBIF data portal is a standard, efficient mechanism that is ready to be used by any country to search and manage much larger amounts of data than are currently in the network.

Countries of origin are invited to help improve GBIF data content, and thus the network's ability to repatriate data. Countries can do this by supporting in-country networks of data providers, and working with partners to mobilise their own data.

Data repatriation projects open doors for N-S, S-S, and N-N collaborations in data digitisation, capacity building and transfer of information and communications technologies. Digitisation projects that increase the amount of useful data available most quickly are those that have a strong applied component while avoiding duplication of effort.

