



## **LifeWatch Thematic Core Services**

### **Taxonomy – the sequel**

**12 – 14 November 2024**

**Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)**

**Oostende, Belgium**

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#### **Background**

As a follow-up to the first LifeWatch Thematic Core Services workshop on Taxonomy in Brussels, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024, a second workshop was organized in Oostende. This sequel workshop was particularly focused on a single user approach, making extensive use of all LifeWatch taxonomy-related services, identifying shortcomings and addressing the need for additional and/or more fine-tuned services.

The overall goal of the workshop is to get better insights into and understanding of how users are approaching the existing services, what could be improved and what might be explored as new developments/services, to better serve the scientific community who relies on taxonomic information from the LifeWatch Species Information Backbone.

Several very detailed, technical and content-related action points were identified over this 3-day workshop. These will not be shared widely, but have become part of an internal workplan of the data management team within VLIZ. As soon as major updates and/or improvements are available with added value to the broad scientific community, these will be communicated.

## Participants

	Tuesday 12 Nov	Wednesday 13 Nov	Thursday 14 Nov
AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tom Webb</li> <li>- Ant Türkmen</li> <li>- Alberto Basset</li> <li>- WoRMS DMT: Leen, Stefanie, Bart V., Ben, Bart DP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tom Webb</li> <li>- Ant Türkmen</li> <li>- Christos Arvanitidis</li> <li>- WoRMS DMT: Leen, Stefanie, Ben, Bart DP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tom Webb</li> <li>- Ant Türkmen</li> <li>- Christos Arvanitidis</li> <li>- WoRMS DMT: Leen, Stefanie, Bart V., Ben, Bart DP</li> </ul>
PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tom Webb</li> <li>- Ant Türkmen</li> <li>- Christos Arvanitidis</li> <li>- WoRMS DMT: Leen, Stefanie, Bart V., Ben, Bart DP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tom Webb</li> <li>- Ant Türkmen</li> <li>- Christos Arvanitidis</li> <li>- WoRMS DMT: Leen, Stefanie, Ben, Bart DP</li> </ul>	

## Expectations of participants

As three different parties were involved in this workshop – user, developer, facilitator – in this workshop, the goals have very different - although largely compatible – viewpoints. All viewpoints were shared and discussed in detail, and summarized here:

- **LW ERIC**
  - o Identifying new needs and requirements from the scientific community.
  - o Increase the number of available taxonomic services.
  - o Identifying initiatives with whom more formal collaborations can be explored.
  - o First suggestions towards a Taxonomy session during the LW ERIC BEeS conference (June-July 2025).
- **Users of available taxonomic services**
  - o A clear and as simple as possible protocol that describes all the steps needed to match taxon names to WoRMS. The question is very much focused on how to deal with the non-matching names.
  - o A step-by-step guide to this protocol, that can easily be shared with and understood by every user.
- **DMT of the LW Species Information Backbone**
  - o A better understanding of how the different taxonomy-related services are being used, and how they can be improved.

## **Hands-on**

The overall goal of the hands-on work is getting a better understanding of which steps are taken by the users, what are the struggles and pitfalls a user encounters, and what are short- and long-term commitments the Data Management Team can take to improve speed, as well as overall improvement of performance of each service and tool.

A major part of the workshop was focused on actual hands-on work, where a work file of a user was explored in detail, and all steps related to data cleaning, processing and running through scripts were looked at.

Demonstration of existing tools went in parallel with identifying specific shortcomings or encountered problems.

Detailed action points were identified for all participants. The goal is to work on all these actions in the next 6-12 months (2025-2026). Once all these actions are completed, the user community will be informed on updates and new developments, as well as – when the occasion allows – receive training on how to use the full suite of tools related to taxon matching.

## **Future training opportunities**

Although the first focus will be on eliminating bugs and potential shortcomings of currently highly used taxonomy services and tools, possible future opportunities to reach a wider audience during 2025-2026 will be explored.

Two possible opportunities for training have already been identified, although details need to be explored before formal commitments can be made:

- 30 June – 3 July: BEeS conference, organized by LW ERIC
- November 2026: World Conference on Marine Biodiversity (WCMB2026)

## **In conclusion**

Learning how users are accessing and deploying the available taxonomic services and tools has identified both the strengths and weaknesses of these. The small size of the group gave the advantage of looking into detail of some of the struggles, and being able to jointly think about the best solutions, both from a technical and user perspective.

The data management team is positive that a large part of the identified actions can be tackled, thereby majorly improving the usage and performance of the services.

This workshop was the starting point for a lot of work to be done behind the scenes, which will progress over the next year. Major updates will be publicly reported on, in the framework of LifeWatch.