

TFBIS

TERRESTRIAL & FRESHWATER BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION SYSTEM UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first of what will be a six monthly newsletter from the TFBIS Programme. I am hoping this newsletter will help raise awareness of the TFBIS Programme, its activities and the projects and products it funds.

I am also very pleased to announce through the newsletter the release of the revised Strategy document for the TFBIS Programme. This document marks the beginning of the next phase of the Programme's work which will see a change in emphasis in some of the areas the Programme has previously been active in. The changes made in the strategy are reflective of the advice received from the TFBIS Steering Committee and feedback obtained during the consultation process which took place earlier this year.

I hope the newsletter will play its part in improving communication on TFBIS Programme activities as we work through the new strategy's implementation during the next five to seven years.

Sue Paterson

General Manager, Marketing and Communications Group, Department of Conservation (Responsible for TFBIS Programme)

STRATEGY DOCUMENT UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who attended the Strategy meetings held throughout the country during March 2007 and to those that provided comment on the draft strategy document. The Strategy has been finalised, with feedback from the workshops incorporated. The Strategy document can be accessed [here](#).

To deliver the Strategy Vision, future invitations for applications will be sought in line with five broad goals which focus on

- Enabling infrastructure*
- Ensuring data and information are preserved and available*
- Ensuring data and information are accessible and usable*
- Ensuring critical gaps are filled*
- Ensuring knowledge is shared*

To address the current priorities it will be necessary to implement some important shifts in emphasis for the fund. These include:

- A reduction of spending on digitisation of existing data and information
- A significant increase in spending on providing underlying and connecting infrastructure, together with the development of supporting standards, privacy, data access, and intellectual property policies.
- Continued funding to fill priority data and information gaps
- More proactive emphasis on the coordination of efforts/communication across the sector

Process changes will include greater emphasis on User Needs analysis and a differentiation between large and small scale projects.

information
data
accessibility
cooperation



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



**Sharing Biodiversity Data,
Information and Knowledge**
A Strategy for the Terrestrial and
Freshwater Biodiversity Information
System (TFBIS)

STAFF



Sue Paterson
General Manager,
Marketing and
Communications Group



Nicola Holmes
Manager - Relationships



Alan White
Programme Manager



Caroline Wallace
Programme Coordinator

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is made up of representatives from central and local government and Crown Research Institutes.



Lindsay Vaughan
Policy Planner
Biosecurity Coordinator,
Tasman District Council



Jim Fretwell
Principal Solutions
Architect, Environment
Bay of Plenty



Bryce Cooper
Director, Strategy and
Risk, NIWA



Kirsty Johnston
Policy Analyst, Ministry
for the Environment



Alison Fleming
Chief Information
Officer, Department of
Conservation



Dave Choquenot
Science Manager,
Landcare Research



Kim Duckworth
Research Data Manager,
Ministry of Fisheries

WHAT IS TFBIS?

The Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information System (TFBIS) Programme was established in 2000 as part of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy to help achieve Objective 9.5, which aims to consolidate and share information about native biodiversity. TFBIS has funded over 100 projects, including the digitisation of collection and observation records and of print publications, and a number of important biodiversity information management systems and tools.

HOW TFBIS WORKS — PROCESS

Applications are invited, usually every six months. These are assessed by the Steering Committee who provide advice and recommendations to the General Manager responsible for TFBIS.

Following approval, deliverables and progress payments are negotiated and a contract issued. The contract stipulates the payment schedule and the deliverables. Progress payments are linked to progress reports. Once the project has been completed, a link to the output is put onto the TFBIS website.

NEXT FUNDING ROUND

The next funding round is expected to open in May 2008. This timeframe is a result of the adoption of the new strategy and the revision work surrounding it.

Need a reminder of the opening of the new round? Email tfbis@doc.govt.nz

NEW ZEALAND ORGANISMS REGISTER (NZOR)

The New Zealand Organisms Register Scoping Report "What's in a Name" was commissioned in 2006 by the TFBIS Programme to investigate the potential for establishing a single authoritative digital source of the names of organisms of importance to New Zealand. The proposed register will store the scientific names, synonymies and taxonomic hierarchy data, tag, vernacular and trade names for over 100,000 native, introduced and unwanted organisms relevant to New Zealand. The project will take three or four years to complete. A cross sector Steering Group lead by Dr Jerry Cooper of Landcare Research Lincoln has completed the scoping report for this proposal. Steering Committee representatives from Te Papa, ERMA, DOC, MAF, NGOs, Landcare and NIWA were assisted by Julian Carver of Seradigm Limited who also had discussions with a range of personnel from museums, universities and Regional Councils. Discussions focussed on ongoing governance and funding are currently being scheduled, after which the General Manager responsible for TFBIS will make a decision on the proposal.

SUCCESSFUL FUNDING

The last TFBIS funding round closed in February 2007. The Committee met in March to consider the applications and make their recommendations to Sue Paterson, the General Manager responsible for TFBIS. The following projects were approved;

PROJECT NAME	AGENCY	AMOUNT
Integrating chromosome numbers of indigenous plants into the NZ Plants Database	Landcare Research	\$23,400
Horak Mushroom Images	Landcare Research	\$18,500
An interactive key to weed species on the National Plant Accord	Landcare Research	\$128,300
Protected Areas Network NZ (PAN-NZ) database: metadata and needs assessment	Landcare Research	\$73,000
Council Biodata Managers Community of Practice	Local Government Online	\$153,000
Predicted national-scale distributions of indigenous freshwater invertebrates	NIWA	\$80,000
Database for NZ Aphids: II Constructing the database	Crop and Food Research	\$173,850
Digitising Botanical Society Journals (<i>subject to discussions with Landcare Research</i>)	NZCPN	\$49,000
Creation of a wetland macro invertebrate community index (WMCI)	NIWA	\$194,770

PROJECTS

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Historical vegetation data from preeminent researchers

This project collated vegetation survey data from identified New Zealand preeminent researchers. Where possible, the data was entered into the National Vegetation System (NVS). If the data was not compatible and the researcher was in agreement, the records were stored at Landcare and metadata added to NVS to alert searchers to their presence at Landcare. The addition of this information to the NVS ensures that this information has been captured and is publicly accessible to a wide range of users.

TFBIS Project 156, Landcare Research, Larry Burrows and Peter Bellingham

<http://nvs.landcareresearch.co.nz>

Guide for ecological understanding and identification of fungi in New Zealand

This project has funded preparation of a printed and on-line introductory illustrated field guide to the common larger fungi of New Zealand. The book *A Guide to some Common Macrofungi of New Zealand* (Johnston P, Buchanan P, Beever R, Paulus B, Landcare Research, 2007) and website begin with a brief introduction to fungal biology and identification using macroscopic features, followed by an identification key. An introduction in Maori is also provided. The 191 page book treats over 130 genera and 250 species, each illustrated in colour.

TFBIS Project 125, Landcare Research, Peter Buchanan

http://fungalguidel.landcareresearch.co.nz/WebForms/FG_Home.aspx

Atlas of Bird Distribution in NZ 1999–2004

The OSNZ launched a comprehensive survey of New Zealand's avifauna in August this year. With some 533 pages and more than 2100 maps covering over 200 of our endemic, native, migratory and introduced birds, this work is the result of 5 years of extensive surveying by more than 850 teams throughout the country. Seasonal and breeding data are provided for each of the birds and there is a full section devoted to habitat use.

The detailed material about the atlas (pdf files of various pages in the atlas including Contents and how data may be ordered) can be found at www.bird.org.nz

The sales section for the atlas is at www.osnz.org.nz with links between both sites.

TFBIS Project 42, Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Chris Robertson

The Right Honourable Chief Justice Dame Sian Elias with Christopher Robertson at the launch of the Atlas of Bird Distribution at Government House, August 2007

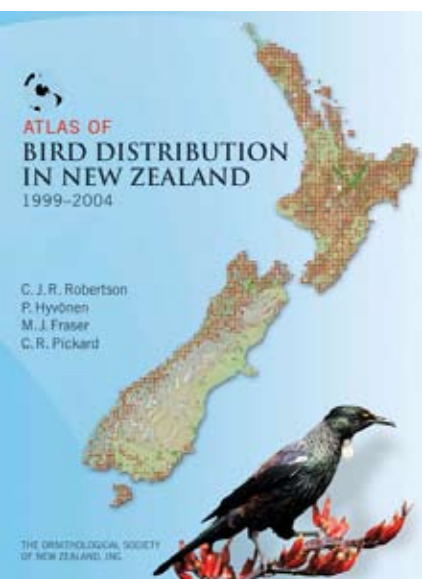


Web guide to soil invertebrates

This site provides information on New Zealand soil and litter invertebrates, including their diversity, biology, ecosystem role, and conservation status. All pages are illustrated with photographs of living animals.

TFBIS Project 86, Dr Maria Minor

<http://soilbugs.massey.ac.nz/index.php>



PROJECTS

Freshwater Biodata Information System

The Freshwater Biodata Information System (FBIS) contains fish, algae, aquatic plant and invertebrate data and metadata gathered from New Zealand's freshwater streams, rivers and lakes.

You can use textual searching or map-based tools to display freshwater biodata and map the points where they were collected. Our Freshwater Information New Zealand (FINZ) website provides more sophisticated map-based browsing of a broad range of freshwater data.

FBIS provides different ways to search for biodata: choose a predefined search from a list of common searches; use the map view to draw a box on a map and search for biodata; or create your own search for maximum search flexibility.

You can also look at metadata that provide high-level descriptions of the biodata within FBIS and generate predefined reports that access FBIS data. Most of the data within FBIS are publicly visible — to see private data you will need to log in.

FBIS is offered as a nationally available resource for the New Zealand public, institutions and companies who need access to a well-maintained long-term data repository. If you have good-quality algae, fish, invertebrate or macrophyte biodata from New Zealand that could be included in FBIS, please contact us.

A recent addition to FBIS data was the inclusion of information from Cawthron Institute.

WHAT'S NEXT

The Strategy signals a change in funding emphasis and identifies a number of improvements that are necessary to enable the Programme to work towards its new Vision. Over the next few months staff will be preparing an Action Plan to implement the strategy. This will involve the review of all current processes, related information and procedures. When the required improvements are in place and new forms and processes finalised, the next funding round will be announced. This is expected to be in May 2008.

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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If you have any suggestions for content or information please email Caroline at cwallace@doc.govt.nz.

TFBIS Programme
Administered by the Department of Conservation

P O Box 10 420
Wellington, 6143

Phone: (04) 471 3142 (Alan)
(04) 471 3298 (Caroline)

Email: tfbis@doc.govt.nz

www.biodiversity.govt.nz/land/nzbs/tfbis/tfbis/index.html