

BIODIVERSITY NEWSFLASH : GBIF SPECIAL EDITION



November 2015

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▶ Winners named for first GBIF Ebbe Nielsen Challenge



Nicolas Noé, from the Belgian Biodiversity Platform

An expert jury has awarded first prize in the inaugural GBIF Ebbe Nielsen Challenge to a Belgium-based trio known as Dataitable for "GBIF dataset metrics", a browser extension that provides at-a-glance insights about datasets available through GBIF.org. Biologist Richard Pyle earned the second prize for BioGUID.org, a web service that crosslinks identifiers linked to data objects in the biodiversity realm.

The recipients receiving first prize are Peter Desmet (INBO), Bart Aelterman (INBO) and Nicolas Noé (Belgian Biodiversity Platform), whose entry earned the highest marks from among six finalists to capture the €20,000 prize. Nicolas, in Madagascar to participate in events surrounding GBIF's 22nd governing board meeting, accepted the prize from Tanya Abrahamse, CEO of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

"The three of us started Dataitable about a year ago, to work one day a week on projects that really interest us," said Nicolas. "The GBIF Ebbe Nielsen Challenge was our first collaboration, so this prize is an awesome encouragement to continue to do so!"

"The excellence of the winners' submissions reflects the quality and creativity inspired by the challenge as a whole," said Donald Hobern, GBIF executive secretary. *"The revamped prize exceeded our expectations and offers a fitting legacy for Ebbe Nielsen. We're eager to see the impact that this and future competitions can bring to-and-from-biodiversity information's communities."*

Dataitable describes its submission as a 'proof of concept' that visually enhances dataset pages on GBIF.org. The [open-source submission](#) combines a module that calculates and stores key dataset metrics for all GBIF-mediated datasets and a [free Google Chrome extension](#).

Once installed, the extension seamlessly informs users about the contents and relative fitness-for-use of any given dataset, by displaying the taxonomy and multimedia of a dataset, as well as stacked bar charts for aspects like geographic and taxonomic accuracy.

- ▶ [More information about Dataitable](#) [here](#)
- ▶ [More information about the Ebbe Nielsen Challenge](#) [here](#)

► GBIF releases 2014 Science Review

GBIF has released the [2014 Science Review](#), its annual compilation of peer-reviewed papers that use data published through GBIF's global infrastructure in scientific research.

The Science Review documents 350 scientific papers published in 2014 that applied data drawn from across the GBIF network. The Review also illustrates the range of applications through selected summaries that reflect articles of special interest for the scientific and policy communities.

The GBIF Secretariat maintains an ongoing literature tracking programme that monitors and compiles such papers, categorizing them according to the thematic area of research, use of data, discussion and mention of GBIF. As in previous years, this edition of the Science Review profiles uses and trends while highlighting and cataloguing research applications of GBIF-mediated data across a wide range of policy areas and disciplines, including:

- Invasive alien species
- Impacts of climate change
- Species conservation and protected areas
- Biodiversity and human health

- Food, farming and biofuels
- Ecosystem services
- Ecology, biogeography and evolutionary studies
- Data management
- Data papers
- Data and research infrastructures

Interested users can access a complete bibliography of research citations from 2014 and previous years both on [GBIF.org](#) and in GBIF's [Mendeley public library](#).

A PDF of the 2014 Science Review is [available for download](#) from [GBIF.org](#). Those interested in receiving printed copies can request them from comms@gbif.org.



► Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity addresses GBIF GB22

In a message to the governing board meeting, the executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Braulio Dias, emphasized the critical role that GBIF has played in improving the scientific knowledge needed in order to sustain healthy ecosystems.

"Management measures require extensive data on biodiversity. Although data tools exist in most regions, Africa and small island developing states remain in the data gap. That's why GBIF work in these regions is particularly important" Mr Dias said.

► See full [video here](#)



Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary of the CBD

► New opportunity for publication of species sampling and monitoring data

The international body responsible for maintaining standards for the exchange of biological data has ratified changes that improve support for mobilization and access of sample-based species data through the GBIF network.

By adding to the rich set of terms already available in the **Darwin Core** (DwC) standard, this action by **Biodiversity Information Standards** - also known as TDWG - will help GBIF-mediated data move beyond "presence only" data and support the discovery and application of richer, more quantitative information used in other areas of scientific discovery and research, particularly ecological monitoring and assessment.

Sample-based data come from thousands of different kinds of environmental, ecological, and natural resource investigations. These events range from one-off surveys to ongoing monitoring and include activities like freshwater and marine sampling, plant cover and vegetation plots, and citizen science bird counts, among others.

In addition to bringing in new datasets, these changes could also improve the quality and utility of many datasets already published through GBIF,



which derive from the more complex sources required to understand how species populations change across space and time.

"The Darwin Core extension for sample data is a major advancement for the global biodiversity community," said Henrique Pereira, chair of **GEO BON**. *"Monitoring biodiversity change often requires repeated measures at the same place. This extension will enable data holders publishing through the GBIF network to share population abundance data (including time series population data) or presence/absence data, and also to document the sampling protocol."*

- ➔ *More information [here](#)*
- ➔ *IPT latest release, supporting sample based data, is available for [download](#), see [release notes](#)*

► New Belgian country report



This report provides a series of summary charts, statistics and other details about the mobilization and use of open-access species data through the GBIF network at global and national scales. These metrics represent change over the past 12 months, unless otherwise noted. These automated country reports will be made available for download from country pages GBIF.org early next year.

Taken together, the elements of this report can help guide and measure progress toward the information

Country Report

needs for national and international commitments on biodiversity and sustainable development.

The report displays graphs and figures on 3 main topics :

1. Access and Usage
2. Data availability in Belgium
3. Data mobilization

- ➔ *The full report is available [here](#)*



► GBIF invites feedback on report on data for agrobiodiversity

GBIF has launched a [public consultation](#) on recommendations to improve the data available for biodiversity research linked to agriculture. It is inviting feedback on the report of the [task group on data fitness for use in agrobiodiversity](#), which was set up to assess the completeness of GBIF-mediated data relevant to the theme.

The document was drawn up following expert consultations, and outlines ways to improve the fit of available data for agrobiodiversity. The task group's recommendations include stimulating the publication of genebank data through the use of the [Multi-Crop Passport Descriptors \(MCPD\)](#), the international standard for exchanging germplasm

information; publishing checklists and classifications of cultivar species and landraces; and providing training to mobilize relevant data.

Interested users are requested to provide comments on the report via the [GBIF community site](#). The deadline for feedback is 15 December 2015.

GBIF also encourages the agrobiodiversity community to contribute use cases using the available [template](#).

► *The full report is available [here](#)*

'Biodiversity Newsflash' is published whenever the need arises to inform the Belgian biodiversity research community on new developments in biodiversity research policies.

The [Belgian Biodiversity Platform](#) is an initiative by the [Belgian Science Policy Office \(BELSPO\)](#)

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Page 1 : Nicolas Noé. <http://www.gbif.org/newsroom/news/2015-ebbe-nielsen-challenge-winners>

Page 3 : Photo of a biologist holding up a common musk turtle during a survey of basking turtles.

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