



The Freshwater Information Platform – an online network supporting freshwater biodiversity research and policy

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Species distribution data is crucial for improving our understanding of biodiversity and its threats. This is especially the case for freshwater environments, which are heavily affected by the global biodiversity crisis. Currently, a huge body of freshwater biodiversity data is often difficult to access, because systematic data publishing practices have not yet been adopted by the freshwater research community.

The Freshwater Information Platform (FIP; www.freshwaterplatform.eu) – initiated through the BioFresh project – aims at pooling freshwater related research information from a variety of projects and initiatives to make it easily accessible for scientists, water managers and conservationists as well as the interested public. It consists of several major components, three of which we want to specifically address: (1) The Freshwater Biodiversity Data Portal aims at mobilising freshwater biodiversity data, making them online available. Datasets in the portal are described and documented in the (2) Freshwater Metadatabase and published as open access articles in the Freshwater Metadata Journal. The use of collected datasets for large-scale analyses and models is demonstrated in the (3) Global Freshwater Biodiversity Atlas that publishes interactive online maps featuring research results on freshwater biodiversity, resources, threats and conservation priorities.

Here we present the main components of the FIP as tools to streamline open access freshwater data publication arguing this will improve the capacity to protect and manage freshwater biodiversity in the face of global change.