



Taxonomic databases (DELTA) and curatorial management

About the workshop

Time: April 28 – 30, 2016

Place: Trondheim Vandrerhjem conference room

Course credits: 2 ECTS

Assessment: Interactive Key with own dataset, within two weeks after the workshop is finished.

Registration: Registration before April 1st.

Fee: No registration fee for ForBio members or associates.

Maximum number of participants: 18

Teachers: Charles Oliver Coleman, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin (oliver.coleman@mfn-berlin.de); Maria Capa, NTNU University Museum, Trondheim (maria.capa@ntnu.no).

Prerequisites: You need to bring a laptop and preferably with open-DELTA installed before the workshop (<http://downloads.ala.org.au/p/Open%20DELTA>). If possible also install Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop.

Please bring identification literature and printed keys of your favourite creatures so you can setting up your own DELTA matrix and digital files of scans of these taxa and their character states.

Travel and accommodation: The course is arranged by the Research School in Biosystematics.

ForBio – and travel and accommodation is refunded for graduate students or postdocs registered at Norwegian universities and research institutes. BioCEED and NABiS students are encouraged to apply. ForBio will not refund travel or accommodation costs for other associates. See <http://www.forbio.uio.no> for more information on ForBio and membership.

Accommodation at Trondheim Vandrerhjem is available with some discount for ForBio. Please contact maria.capa@ntnu.no if interested.

Course description

DELTA is an advanced computer program (Dallwitz, 2005) to handle all kinds of taxonomic data in the most optimal way. It is currently regarded as the state of the art tool in modern taxonomy and used by taxonomists to (re)describe taxa in a standardised format, which makes the information readily available for comparative (phylogenetic) studies, cataloguing of fauna lists and construction of interactive illustrated keys.

In the course you will learn DELTA step by step and how to generating formatted descriptions of taxa and interactive keys. Curation of collections, collection databases and things to consider when dealing with digital data will also be touched, including how to set your own collection.

DELTA is a database for storing taxonomic information, mainly morphological characters and states. DELTA-databases allow the growth of taxonomic knowledge in a digital form. The databases can be shared with colleagues and new species with their characteristics can be added in minutes. Morphological differences between taxa can be shown, diagnoses and keys can be extracted, and NEXUS files can be created for running phylogenetic analyses. The most striking feature is to export a fully formatted description for a taxonomic publications — to write a taxonomic paper by pushing a button. By this, taxonomic papers can be written fast and with consistent terminology, redundant phrases can be avoided.

With the DELTA module INTKEY you can generate interactive identification tools, which are also useful for non-taxonomists (e.g. ecologists or parataxonomists). With INTKEY it is possible to identify taxa by clicking on illustrated character states. These INTKEY keys can be published on the internet (e.g. <http://crustacea.net>).

Curation of collections, collection databases and things to consider when dealing with digital data will also be touched.

Additionally there will be lectures on digital illustrations and on how to set up your own collections in the evening.

Coleman, C.O.; Lowry, J.K., Macfarlane, T. (2010) DELTA for Beginners. An introduction to the taxonomy software package DELTA. Zookeys 45: 1–75 (2010) doi: 10.3897/zookeys.45.263, <http://zookeys.pensoft.net/articles.php?id=2196>