

International database of plants, fungi and animals BioLib.cz

BioLib.cz is a freely accessible internet database of organisms of the whole world, which is open for participation of both experts and public. Unlike similar open encyclopedias, BioLib is highly specialized in biology and has complex system of access privileges for different groups and sections of the database. Any registered user can add new photographs, propose identifications of images, update taxonomy, scientific synonyms and vernacular names, add texts, glossary terms, comments and so on, but their contributions have to be reviewed by administrators of respective section before they are accepted.

BioLib is available in Czech and English language, however it is possible to add common names and text in almost any widely used language. Apart from taxonomic system and gallery BioLib offers functions such as thematic listings of species and images (by country, color, glossary terms and so on), database of websites and literature, glossary, database of protected areas, publication of articles, forum board, functions for species mapping and many others. BioLib.cz is functioning for over ten years and today counts as one of the biggest projects of its kind on the internet. Each day 7,000 unique users visit BioLib in average, sometimes even over 10,000 users from Czech Republic and from abroad. Among them are both experts and amateurs, students and teachers of elementary schools, colleges and universities, redactors, journalists, translators, collectors and photographers. Taxonomic database contains over 1,000,000 records and in gallery can be found more than 220,000 identified images. BioLib simplifies access to biodiversity data, creates a bridge between experts and public and helps to popularize biology.

The nonprofit organization of the same name was founded in 2012 to educate, popularize natural sciences and support scientific work in biological fields by means of the BioLib website.

Importance of BioLib

One of the notable functions of BioLib is a public faunistic mapping in Czech Republic on which participates Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection (AOPK ČR), National museum of Prague and experts from several other organizations. Observed species include all mammals, amphibians, reptiles and selected species of fishes and invertebrates, with mapped species list ever expanding. Observations sent by public are reviewed by administrators and accepted to database, from which faunistic maps are automatically generated, and data is further shared with AOPK ČR.

Images uploaded by public is also of great faunistic and floristic importance and have so far lead to several interesting findings about new or threatened species of Czech Republic.

Also worth mentioning are functions for managing Czech common names for organisms or tools to manage checklist of species occurring in Czech Republic.

Further development

In near future we would like to expand our cooperation with universities, museums and other institutions and experts both from Czech Republic and abroad.

We would like to translate web interface of BioLib to different languages, which would increase number of users and who would in turn provide more images and expertise of species from other countries.

We can offer functions and our experience with public species mappings, common names management and checklist compilation and help to apply them in countries, where similar activities are missing.

With a minimum of changes, BioLib can act as a biological information portal for any country and can save lot of work associated with building and managing a new website, while it can provide lot of benefit from sharing data and expertise from users all over the world.

<http://www.biolib.cz/en/>

Ondřej Zicha, ondrej.zicha@gmail.com

