

TaiBIF, integration of Taiwan's biodiversity information

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Taiwan is a small island, yet it possesses extraordinarily rich biodiversity resources including many endemic species. In order to promote education, research, conservation and sustainability of these resources, comprehensive databases and national websites must be built and free and open access to all the relevant information must be provided to researchers and the general public alike. In light of this, the "Biodiversity Promotion Plan," adopted by the Executive Yuan in 2001, stipulates the creation of a national biodiversity information center, related databases and data exchange mechanisms. The same year, Taiwan joined GBIF as an Associate Participant. In 2002, Academia Sinica began to create the database of "Catalog of Life in Taiwan" (TaiBNET, later renamed TaiCOL, <http://col.taibif.tw>).

TaiBIF (<http://www.taibif.tw>), GBIF's node in Taiwan, was set up in 2004 to integrate Taiwan's biodiversity information which include species checklist, local expert list, species descriptions and images, introduction of endemic species and invasive species, terrestrial and marine organism distributions, biodiversity literatures, geographical and environmental information, as well as information on relevant institutions, organizations and projects. Under TaiBIF portal, there are the species checklist TaiCOL, Taiwan Barcode of Life (TaiBOL, <http://bol.taibif.tw>), Taiwan's Encyclopedia of Life (TaiEOL, <http://eol.taibif.tw>), and Biota Taiwanica (<http://biota.taibif.tw/>). Through the years, TaiBIF has integrated specimen information from most museums and herbaria in Taiwan as well as ecological survey data from government agencies and organizations. A total of 1.6 million digital specimen and observational records from 28 datasets are now accessible through the TaiBIF website and, through the GBIF Portal, shared and exchanged with the global community. Additionally, in accordance with the metadata and exchange platform standards and technologies which GBIF formulated and developed, TaiBIF creates certain software tools and conducts educational training workshops on them.