BioFresh

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Biodiversity of Freshwater Ecosystems: Status, Trends, Pressures, and Conservation Priorities

Scientists and water managers have collected vast amounts of data on freshwater biodiversity. Nonetheless it is often impossible to be certain of the geographic range of a species. Why is this? The existing data from all of these studies are widely dispersed, gathered in locally-managed databases, many of which are not publicly available. In summary, the pieces of the global freshwater biodiversity puzzle are scattered, and it is difficult even to find them. What a story they could they tell if all of the pieces were combined and easily accessible to scientists, policy makers and planners?

Such an integrated and accessible dataset will be used to improve and establish effective plans for conservation and for a better understanding of the services provided by aquatic ecosystems.

BioFresh will improve the capacity to protect and manage freshwater biodiversity

- by building an information platform as a gateway for scientific research on freshwater biodiversity.
- by raising awareness of the importance of freshwater biodiversity and its role in providing ecosystem services.
- by predicting the future responses of freshwater biodiversity to multiple stressors in the face of global change.

A major challenge is to complement the existing databases on freshwater biodiversity and distribution patterns, along with strict quality controls, to consent the continuous integration of new data. Within BioFresh, these data will be linked with geographical and socio-economic information. By developing just such a universally accessible information platform, BioFresh will foster our understanding of present freshwater biodiversity and changes expected for the future.

BioFresh will use existing data to build predictive models of biodiversity change in order to support a broad diversity of critical needs in freshwater biodiversity management and conservation. Combining the construction of the portal with scientific research ensures an optimised product for use. Ultimately, the interoperable datasets, together with geospatial visualisation tools and predictive models, will be made freely accessible through the web portal, forming the kernel of an unprecedented global information tool to all decision makers, stakeholders and users in freshwater biodiversity.

Further Information

Project Duration
November 2009 - April 2014

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