**Biological Interaction Data Interest Group – BID-IG**

**TDWG Interest Group (Open)**

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**Summary**

Scientists use a variety of methods to collect, record, and store biological interaction data, which include predator-prey, parasite-host, and pollinator-plant interactions, among others. Uses for those data are equally diverse, as they are collected primarily to answer different scientific questions. Biological interaction data can be important in other situations and domains. For example, they can play an important role in building decision support systems for conservation and sustainable use in agriculture.

Despite of their importance, a limited amount of biological interaction data are available online, especially if compared to the number of data registers available on occurrence data portals. Numerous projects are working to aggregate, organize, and efficiently disseminate biological interaction data. However, we lack a formal data standard to support that work.

Examples of issues that need to be resolved in this domain include:

* defining controlled vocabularies for the nature of species interactions.
* how to structure interaction data so that the links between observations of interacting organisms are not lost
* providing standards that can be used seamlessly with different groups of organisms and types of interaction.

Therefore, in this Interest Group we want to discuss, formalize and develop a common background to help standardize biological interaction data in the Biodiversity Informatics community, avoiding duplication of effort and sharing knowledge and solutions. Our final aim is to promote digitization, data sharing, aggregation and ultimately to improve the use of biological interaction data.

**Becoming Involved**

During the 2016 TDWG Conference, in Santa Clara de San Carlos, Costa Rica, a group of people gathered to begin discussions on this issue, under the TDWG umbrella. We, now propose the creation of an Interest Group on Biological Interactions Data where this topic can be discussed within the broader biodiversity informatics community.

All interested parties are encouraged to become involved with the Interest Group or specific Task Groups it may convene in the future. Membership of the group is open. If you work with biological interaction data at any level, whether in digitization, publication, aggregation or analysis, and you would like to be able to openly share and benefit from all advantages which a data standard can provide, you are welcome to join the Biological Interaction Data Interest Group.

Please contact the convenors or any core member about how to become involved.

The TDWG process requires that any new Task Group be launched through an Interest Group. The Biological Interaction Data Interest Group can facilitate establishment of new Task Groups that relate to this topic. Please contact the convenor to discuss potential projects or join existing Task Groups.

**Resources**

∙        <https://github.com/BioComp-USP/interaction-data-group>

Since this is not yet a formal TDWG group we have been working under the BioComp-USP GitHub repository, and we will move to the TDWG repository as soon as we have an Interest Group on Interaction Data approved by the TDWG exec.