[Learn about the ALA](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/atlas-information-hub/) > [How the ALA works](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/)

**Knowledge Base**

**How the ALA works**

**How we upload data sets**

If you already have a collection of species sightings they can be submitted as a data set rather than one at a time using the record a sighting form. A data set needs to be in a structured data format (spread sheet or database) with an identifier for each record and the information about the sightings in individual columns. There are some example templates below. For more information on the data standard used by the ALA the full Darwin Core schema can also be found below. When records are submitted as a data set they will be given an information page describing the data and it’s terms of use as well as displaying the usage via the ALA.

[**View full Darwin Core schema**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/)

**How to submit a data set**

The first stage in submitting a data set is to produce a file suitable for loading into the ALA. If you manage your data in a spread sheet you can create copy with Darwin Core column headings or copy your data into one of the templates below.

If you manage your data in a data base you’ll need to produce and export a file. Once you have a suitably formatted file, the sandbox (link below) is a tool to run a trial load of your data (without it being loaded to the main ALA) to test if it displays correctly.

If you have a large or complex dataset please contact the ALA Data Management Team below.

**Download a template:**

* ALA occurrence data template – simple .XLS
* ALA occurrence data template – high quality .XLS
* ALA species list template .XLS
* ALA multimedia template .XLS
* ALA species profile template

[**Test data in the sandbox**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/) [**Contact Data Management**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/)

**How we integrate data**

Integrating data is the process of bringing multiple, disparate datasets together and combining them into a single data structure. Combining and standardising the different data sets allows them to be searched as a single unit using common terms. The ALA brings together hundreds of data sets and makes them available through a common interface. The ALA uses Darwin Core, an internationally developed biodiversity data interchange standard, as it’s core data model.

**How we do it**

Data sets submitted for loading into the ALA are reviewed by the Data Management Team for the type of content and ability to be mapped to Darwin core. Then in communication with owner/custodian the data is processed to a format suitable for loading using data transformation software. If there is going to be an ongoing load schedule the processing saved for future repeat use.

Contact the Data Management team below if you have questions about the ALA data integration process.

[**Submit a data set**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/) [**Contact Data Management**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/)

**How we handle sensitive data**

A small proportion of species in the ALA are considered sensitive. There are many reasons a species might be considered sensitive such as being highly endangered or on a controlled pests list. The data associated with these sensitive species is also considered sensitive meaning that if the exact location of the species was known, individuals of that species might be at risk. To protect these species, the ALA has a sensitive data service to lessen the accuracy of location data for sensitive species records.

**How we do it**

Each state and territory supplies the ALA with a list of sensitive species in their jurisdiction and the rules for processing records of those species.

When a species record from a sensitive species list is uploaded via Record a Sighting, the location of the record is modified according to the relevant rules. The location may be completely withheld or the accuracy of location coordinates may be adjusted. The ALA’s data integration tool, Sandbox (http://sandbox.ala.org.au/datacheck/), also runs sensitive data processing software.

To discuss the inclusion or removal of species on a sensitive species list, please contact the list owner specified on the sensitive species lists.

[**Contact Data Management**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/) [**View the Sensitive Species Lists**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-we/)