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The Western Australian Herbarium's specimen database

Plant Science and Herbarium

Project Core Team

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Project Team	required
Program Leader	required
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The Western Australian Herbarium's specimen database

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Context

The Western Australian Herbarium's specimen database (WAHerb) allows staff at the Herbarium to manage and maintain the Herbarium's collections, and provides core data on the distribution, ecology and morphology of all taxa for the department and the community, through the *FloraBase* and *NatureMap* websites. Data from the specimen database is provided to researchers, consultants and community members on request, and to the Australasian Virtual Herbarium (AVH), Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) on a regular basis.

Aims

- Capture, maintain and validate spatial, phenological, population and habitat data for all the Herbarium's collections, enabling curation of the collection and providing core data for *FloraBase* and departmental decision support systems and research.

Progress

- Addition of 10,862 records to WAHerb, including 972 priority flora, 159 **t**hreatened flora and four presumed extinct flora. The following projects and significant collections were databased: Fitzgerald River Flora Survey, Pilbara Inshore Islands Survey, Fortescue Valley Wetlands Survey, Mandora Marsh / Walyarta Survey, Central Ranges Expedition, South West Australian Transitional Transect, and collections from G Byrne, M Hislop, GJ Keighery and AN Start.
- Regularly provided customised specimen data requests (species lists and label data) to departmental officers, researchers and the public.
- 43,323 specimen records were edited as part of activities aimed at ensuring the collection is scientifically valid, up-to-date and aligned with the department's conservation codes.
- A significant task accomplished was the editing of ca. 1,500 fungi specimen records from the merge of the Manjimup Herbarium fungi collection.

Management implications

- WAHerb represents the most comprehensive database on Western Australian plants available and provides a source of information that managers can use for updates on biodiversity or conservation status, plant identification, clarification of plants in an area, and identification of knowledge gaps. This ensures that all research and management activities use up to date and valid plant species names.

Future directions

- Continue adding to, timely editing and validation of herbarium specimen records to maintain currency and connectivity between the Herbarium collection, the Western Australian Plant Census (WACensus) and external databases, including AVH and ALA.