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**INTERNAL MEETING MINUTES**

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| Meeting Purpose | TDWG Sensitive Species Extension Task Group Meeting 2 |
| Time and Date | 21st November 2024 from 1700 AEDT |
| Attendees | Cassia Piper Tania Laity Cam Slatyer  Piers Higgs  Alice Catherine Hughes  Donna Lewis  Jerome Chie-Jen Ko  Kiah Grogan  Mieke Strong  William K Morris  Niels Raes Felicity Smith  Simon Sherrin James Wilson  Andrew Rodrigues  Arthur Chapman  Carly Steen |

## Agenda

The agenda for this meeting will be to go through Arthur's first field "dataSensitiveReason" and suggested options to start to flesh these out (see below)

Also see the Australian Restricted Access Species Data Framework classifications for a point of comparison - [RASD Framework - 2 Principle: Restricted Access Species Data (RASD) Should be Consistently Classified](https://rasd.org.au/pdf-html/principle-consistently-classified.html)

***dataSensitiveReason***

The primary reason why the data is sensitive. Suggested format is either a picklist with values derived from [Criteria 1–4 (or a text field that combines the statements 1a–4g attached to those criteria](https://docs.gbif.org/sensitive-species-best-practices/master/en/#criteria-for-determining-sensitivity)). See Attachment below for a tabular version.

## Introductions

Cam, the Task Group convenor gave a brief overview of the aims of the Task Group for any new members and asking for round the room introductions.

Tania: Working with Cam, Piers and Andrew, set up the working group

Piers: Founder of Gaia Resources

Andrew: GBIF Secretariat based in Copenhagen – interested in data generalisation protocols have been applied.

Alice: University of Hong Kong, interested because of rare and endemic species and wildlife trade which are range limited

Donna: Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN), data and curation lead and curate and manage the data from long-term ecological modeling plots. Interested in collecting data from Indigenous Projected Areas (IPAs).

Will: Finnish Museum of Natural History in Helsinki and node manager GBIF Finland and works on Finnish biodiversity information facility. Maintain checklists of sensitive species and run two parallel instances of sensitive data - one public and one for government. Interested in adopting best practices and communicate better sensitive data treatments and access.

Niels: Naturalis Biodiversity Centre Netherlands, GBIF node manager Netherlands, looking to have to put sensitive data out and wants a solution via this group.

Arthur: Wrote two additions to the best practices for dealing with sensitive data 2005 and 2020 and hoping that these give people a background to develop the extension.

Mieke: Gaia Resources, working on biodiversity repositories at federal level and also for NSW states, and looking at data models and apply appropriate indicators of data sensitivity.

Kiah: Works for Western Australia (WA) State Data Repository, hoping to make sure the data is available and interoperable with the federal biodiversity data repository

Cassia: Biodiversity Information Office – WA State government, career opportunity and advocating sensitive data management in the state of WA

Simon: ALA developer working on the ALA taxonomic backbone and the ALA sensitive data service

Felicity: Department of Environment and Water in South Australia, manage restricted data

James: Queensland biodiversity data repository manager and involved in the federal data project and looking to make sure they know what’s sensitive for licensing and species reasons.

Jerome: Taiwan Biodiversity Research institute - Agricultural Department hosted, and also involved in alliance of biodiversity databases - Taiwan Biodiversity Information Alliance - how to safely share biodiversity data across that group

Carly Steen: From TERN - ecosystem surveillance group, similar work to Donna

Julia Percy-Bower was an apology. – works with WA government with Cassia and Kiah.

## dataSensitiveReason Discussion

Last meeting we agreed to proceed by working through the elements of Arthur’s proposal, starting with the DataSensitive Reason field. We propose to work our way through each element of the proposed extension and look at what might need to be added, or altered, and work towards a deadline of December 2025.

The dataSensitiveReason field - The primary reason why the data is sensitive. Suggested format is either a picklist with values derived from Criteria 1–4 (or a text field that combines the statements 1a–4g attached to those criteria).

Cam gives a couple of examples and throws it open to the group for discussion - anything missing from dataSensitiveReason in terms of the categories?

AC: We didn’t include anything about indigenous / cultural sensitivity in the best practices guide, so will need to look at this being accommodated.

CS: There is a need to consult with indigenous peoples prior to developing anything in this respect - Would like to put in something like a holding category that could be added to be used for negotiations and discussions with First Nations peoples in a particular country

MS: Looking at the RASD framework and the best practice guide - could we also include the treatments for these categories as well as in the RASD Framework? Vocabulary management - if the categories had a small running title that might be easier to hold in a data/CSV cell and then the details and explanations could be described in a vocabulary space rather than in the document.

CS: All good points. Attended a meeting yesterday looking at data access at state and commonwealth level in Australia, and there are sensitive species lists for each jurisdiction so if you manage a dataset that covers more than one S&T we have to manage it across multiple jurisdictions - how do we deal with different treatments for a species depending on where it is geolocated.

JW: There’s a differentiation between the reason that the data is sensitive and what treatment we apply to that - so like the thought that it’s a “sensitive species” to start with and then can break it down further from there (e.g. indigenous or legal reasons) but the trap/rabbit hole is to apply a sensitivity treatment and conflating that with a sensitivity reason. What is the kind of list we want here?

AC: The original documents were following guidelines from GBIF - we didn’t look at cultural aspects for that reason. There is a need to document treatments so that users know that there is other data available, as well as the reason about it being sensitive.

CS: Two different fields is what is required?

AC: Yes: the guidelines define sensitivity from a species aspect - the species is at risk – however, the species may not be at risk, but the information is sensitive for other reasons (eg cultural), so by separating those two attributes we might be able to better cater for that.

CS: Use 1a to 4g as a decision framework criterion and then use something like the RASD classes to be how those frameworks are applied.

AH: Sounds like a good balance so that we can get appropriate protection to the species

AC: Two distinct things - is the species threatened by the information provided, or is there sensitivity for other reasons (legal, cultural etc) - and probably need to separate those two - so “taxon is sensitive for these reasons:” and then “the data is sensitive for these reasons:”

TL: Have questions about location; the location might make it sensitive (e.g. cultural sensitivity can be tied to location - ALA example of a totem species on particular country that would indicate where sacred sites might be like caves) - that makes it sensitive. Perhaps sub-categories.

MS: Bringing together a new matrix of the new potential fields - do you want to have several choices that can be applied to each field and is there the potential for “no value” (e.g. no reason to withhold, say so).

WM: Is dataSensitiveReason going to be a property of a single dwc Class? If so which one? Occurrence, Event, Location or Taxon? And would it make sense to have multiple properties across different classes - could apply across many of these classes and might help where we’re talking about the sensitivity?

CS: Would seem to make sense

AC: Occurrence, Location and Taxon are definite, not sure about Event. But might need to have different fields across each of those.

AC: This is important to exchange information between institutions - what happens if a sensitive record in NSW is also provided out to other organisations and Herbaria across the world - people just need to go and look at a duplicate specimen somewhere else and find the raw data.

WM: We also put restrictions on time as well as location - so there is sensitivity to the timing of the data as well – so events would be the relevant place for this.

CS: Timing is important - event data means you can distinguish by finding other plot data from the same site.

JW - is Location a sensitivity reason or is it a sensitivity treatment - agree we should split out sensitivity for occurrence or taxon - and then there will be an application at a dataset level. Splitting it between occurrence and taxon seems to make sense, Location isn’t a reason it’s a treatment that Location would be obfuscated, or the attributes would be obfuscated.

MS: Applying at the DwC:record-level class?

AH: Obscure details of all cultural sites (e.g if it’s a cave, suppress all cave data) then that blanket approaches would create massive gaps in the data. SO simple statements about what can be shared and can’t but find a nuanced approach:

**Action: Cam and Tania to look at restructuring this into a logical table that separates these two concepts out for the group to review next meeting. Including DWC classes.**

DL: Possibly out of scope for this meeting, but considerations around Nagoya Protocol for PreservedSpecimens?

CS: That is the purview of the other TDWB working groups but will check.

**Action: Cam to find out if Nagoya is being reviewed elsewhere**

## Next meeting

Action: Cam and Tania to look at putting it into the calendar for the week of the 16th December onwards.

Meeting Closed: 18:00 AEDT

## Attachment 1

| Chapman (2020) Data Sensitivity Criteria and Statements | | |
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| 1. **Risk of harm** | An assessment of whether the taxon is subject to harmful human activity. | 1a. *The taxon is at risk from a harmful human activity*  1b. *There is no significant risk of a harmful human activity*  1c. *There is established evidence of actual or recent harm to the taxon.*  1d. *There is currently no established evidence of actual harm to the taxon*  *1e. Availability of biodiversity data will increase the likelihood of the harmful human activity taking place*  *1f. Availability of biodiversity data will not increase the likelihood of the harmful human activity taking place* |
| 2. **Impact of harm** | An assessment of the sensitivity of the taxon to the harmful human activity. | 2a. *The taxon has characteristics that make it significantly vulnerable to the harmful human activity.*  2b.  *The taxon is not significantly vulnerable to the harmful human activity.*  *2c. The taxon is vulnerable to harmful human activity over its total range.*  *2d. The taxon is not vulnerable to harmful human activity over its total range****and/or****there are areas where the taxon occurs but is not at significant risk* |
| 3. **Sensitivity of data** | An assessment on whether the release of data will increase harm. | 3a. *The information is already in the public domain, or is already known to the individuals or groups likely to undertake harmful activities.*  *3b. The content and detail of the data if released would****not****enable someone to carry out a harmful activity upon the taxon or attribute*  *3c. The information is not in the public domain, and is****not****already known to individuals or groups likely to undertake harmful activities.*  *3d. The information is already in the public domain, or is already known to the individuals or groups likely to undertake harmful activities*  *3e. Disclosure of the data is****likely****to damage a partnership or relationship the maintenance of which is essential to helping achieve a specific conservation objective*  *3f. Disclosure of the data****will not****damage any partnership or relationship essential to conservation.*  *3g. Disclosure****would****allow the locations of sensitive features to be derived through combination with other publicly available information sources.*  *3h. Disclosure****will not****allow the locations of sensitive features to be derived through combination with other publicly available information sources.* |
| 4. **Decision on release and category of sensitivity** | A balanced decision regarding the release of the data and a determination of the category of sensitivity, and thus the level of generalization, of the data for release. | 4a. *On balance, release of the information will, or is likely to, increase the risk of environmental harm or harm to a living person*  4b. *On balance, release of the data will not increase the risk of environmental harm or harm to a living person*  *4c. The species is a distinctive species of high biological significance, is under high threat from exploitation/disease or other identifiable threat and even general locality information may threaten the taxon, or the release of the information could cause irreparable harm to the environment, an individual, or some other feature****.***  *4d. The species is classed as highly sensitive, and the provision of precise locations would subject the species to threats such as disturbance and exploitation, and/or the record includes highly sensitive information, the release of which could cause extreme harm to the environment or an individual.*  *4e. The species is classed as of medium to high sensitivity, and the provision of precise locations could subject the species to threats such as collection or deliberate damage, and/or the record includes sensitive information, the release of which could cause harm to the environment or to an individual.*  *4f. The species is classed as of low to medium sensitivity, and the provision of precise locations could subject the species to threats such as disturbance and exploitation. Detailed data may be made available to individuals under licence.*  *4g. The species is classed as of low sensitivity, and the distribution of precise locations is unlikely to subject the species to significant threat, and/or the record includes information of low sensitivity, the release of which is unlikely to cause harm to the environment or to any individual. The data should be released to the public ‘as-held’* |