|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| meeting Minutes | |
| TDWG Sensitive Species Data Task group | |
| Date: | 21 May 2025 |
| Time: | 21:00 to 22:00 (AEST) |
| Chairperson | Cameron Slatyer |

# In attendance

## Tania Laity, Arthur Chapman, Cassia Piper, Alice Hughes, Debora Arlt, Mieke Strong, Chandra Earl, John Wieczorek, Donna Lewis

## **Apologies**

## Piers Higgs, Andrew Rodrigues, Mariko Kageyama, Felicity Smith, Niels Klazenga.

# reports

**Presentation of changes to the sensitivity reasons and treatments document.**

Tania updated on progress of this document to the task group and went through high level changes that have been made since our last meeting in March 2025.

* Sensitivity Reasons:
  + Refined use cases and tried to word them in similar language
  + Added a column for invalid usage examples ie where the category does not apply
  + Refined some of the names of the categories and subcategories to attempt to make them clearer and more distinguishable from each other e.g. Subcategory 1.2 previously read “Collector IDs of individuals (where this can be reconciled with collector). Also renamed category 3 to biosecurity as it was a better fit.
  + Moved some subcategories to different categories ie 1.3 was moved to the privacy category from under Species Attributes as it was considered to be more about privacy concerns.
  + Reduced overlap between categories by removing some subcategories ie Category 5.
* Sensitivity Treatments:
  + Refined Category B to be more flexible ie rather than list all levels of obfuscation as subcategories, we defined the subcategories by type of treatment ie – truncating coordinates, replacing coordinates with a standard grid, randomising within a polygon and replacing coordinates with centroid of a region.
  + The replacement / explanatory text attributed to these treatments could then include the degree to which coordinates have been truncated or the specific polygons or grids which were used to obfuscate the coordinates. We can define this standard text as a group later in the process.
  + Moved First Nations into their own category rather than under “Other Treatments” to give them better standing in the list and to enable additional treatments to be defined at a later date.

Cam opened it up for discussion regarding the invalid usage examples as these need to include compelling examples in them to avoid data custodians / organisations withholding data by default because it’s the easiest option. As they are only a first (quick) draft we would like to get comments and feedback from the group to help refine them. The group agreed that they were a valuable addition to the table.

**ACTION:** *Task Group Members to provide feedback, suggestions and examples on the invalid usage column (including the title of the column!)*

**ACTION***: Task Group Member to provide feedback, comment and suggestions on the Treatments and Reasons Doc by* ***11 June 2025 out of session. Please reply all so that others are across what is being discussed.***

**Discussion around merits of publishing detailed reasons and treatments**

Chandra raised a potential issue with publication of the sensitivity reasons and treatments applied to records being used to re-identify records of sensitive taxa or that the reason for sensitivity itself may be an issue.

The group have also included more generic reasons in some of the categories to capture reasons either not already included in the subcategories or that could also potentially be used for reasons that the data provider doesn’t want to divulge in detail.

Arthur mentioned that the intent was to let users know that there is more information that they can request access to that they may be interested in.

It was agreed that we will discuss the potential implications of this once we start to look at combinations of reasons and treatments and the standardized replacement text.

**Other comments in reasons and treatments doc for discussion**

There was a discussion around where to tie reasons and treatments to:

* Where possible it should be tied to the attribute it pertains to. However, there will be some treatments that change the attribute itself e.g. generalising to higher taxon or generalising locality to a national park.
* This will require further discussion when we start to work on how to operationalize the extension.

Other Treatments – subcategory F.1 - Obfuscate or withhold records of non-sensitive taxa due to associations with sensitive taxa.

* Piers had asked if this also applies to collectors or field trips and date ranges.
* It was agreed that this category either needs to be reframed or an additional treatment subcategory added.
* Need to consider the trade-offs of restricting related and valuable information vs releasing as much as possible.
* There is a risk of organisations overusing some categories which we want to avoid as well – could be due to close but well-known associations for example.

**ACTION:** *Task Group Members to provide suggestions on wording of F1 or a possible second subcategory under “Other treatments”.*

**Exclusion of inappropriate / offensive language from the TG Scope**

Cam mentioned that Mariko had raised the issue of inappropriate or offensive language being included in the scope of the task group. Cam wanted to clarify that the group agreed it was out of scope although related. It was agreed that there is a lot of academic discussion happening around this topic at the moment and the task group doesn’t want to wade into it.

See this issue for context: <https://github.com/tdwg/dwc/issues/522#issuecomment-2711969497>

# Other Business

**Darwin Core Packages**

John mentioned work in TDWG on DWC packages that may be relevant once we start to operationalize this extension. He is interested in testing use cases from this group to try to work through how a DWC RASD package could be used to affiliate treatments and reasons to an occurrence record, dataset or an event.

DWC packages will be out for public consultation in September 2025 and John is keen to get some examples prior to this.

He is doing a talk on the 2nd June about DWC Packages for those who are interested.

<https://www.gbif.org/event/7oJVaWQZ2wlknRfM7w4OXE/introducing-the-darwin-core-data-package>

**ACTION:** *Task Group to discuss at a later stage DWC Archives vs other options for implementation of this extension.*

**ACTION:** *Task group to propose some use cases for John to work through*

**ACTION:** *Interested task group members to join John’s talk on the 2nd June.*

# Next meeting

## Next meeting will be scheduled in about 4-5 weeks.