

Welcome to FishBase

FishBase contains different things for different people

FishBase is an information system with key data on the biology of all fishes. Similar to an encyclopedia, FishBase contains different things for different people. For example, fisheries managers will dive into the largest existing compilation of population dynamics data; teachers and students will find numerous graphs illustrating basic concepts of fish biology; conservationists will use the lists of threatened fishes for any given country; policymakers may be interested in a chronological, annotated list of introductions to their country; research scientists, as well as funding agencies, will find it useful to gain a quick overview of what is known about a certain species; zoologists and physiologists will have the largest existing compilations of fish morphology, metabolism, gill area, brain size, eye pigment, or swimming speed at their fingertips; ecologists will likewise use data on diet composition, trophic levels, food consumption and predators as inputs for their models; the fishing industry will find proximate analyses, as well as processing recommendations for many marine species; anglers will enjoy a listing of all game fishes occurring in a particular country; and scholars interested in local knowledge will find more than 300,000 common names of fishes together with the language/culture in which they are used and comments on their etymology.

Unexpected usage of FishBase

The above text shows the usage of FishBase that we expected when we first published it on CD-ROM and later on the Internet, in the late 1990s. That assessment has been largely correct with regard to scientific use, which led to over 5000 citations of FishBase as counted by Google Scholar. But there were quite substantial groups of users we had not anticipated, such as students trying to finish their term papers, and translators looking for common names of fishes in other languages. No doubt, there will be other users that we have never dreamt of, among the half-million monthly visitors to www.fishbase.org.

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