



Memorandum of Understanding

Between the

THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON TAXONOMIC DATABASES, commonly
called Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG)
based officially at

1342 34th Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94122
USA

Represented by David Bloom, Chair of TDWG

and the

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE (ICZN)
based officially at

Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum,
National University of Singapore
2 Conservatory Dr,
Singapore 117377

Represented by Thomas Pape, President of ICZN



Preamble

Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) is the (meta)data standards authority in the biodiversity domain. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) produces the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN Code), which governs the process of establishing and using scientific names of animals, thereby promoting stability in zoological nomenclature. The scope of TDWG spans biodiversity data at large, while that of ICZN focuses on formal procedures regulating the establishment and correct use of scientific names of animals and arbitrating in issues like priority and typification among existing names, including the maintenance of the Official Register of Zoological Nomenclature (ZooBank). Both organizations strive for the standardization and broad adoption of methods to share information related to taxa through scientific nomenclature.

The overlap of TDWG and the ICZN in structured biodiversity data represents an opportunity to begin sustainable convergence of the (meta)data standards developed by TDWG to accommodate precise and accurate exchange of zoological names and their associated informatic properties. Most notably among these are the aspects of the Darwin Core (DwC) and the Access to Biological Collection Data (ABCD) standards that involve Taxa and their associated scientific names (Taxon Class), nomenclatural type specimens (MaterialEntity class), and the association between them (Identification Class), as well as published works (references) and their authors (agents). This memorandum builds on the historical association between TDWG and the ICZN in informing the development of the Taxon Concept Schema (TCS), and lays a foundation for continued technical collaboration to improve TDWG data standards to more effectively accommodate the zoological nomenclatural rules set forth in the ICZN Code, as well as the information maintained in ZooBank.

Memorandum

Recognizing that both Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) and the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) have a shared interest in establishing robust (meta)data specifications for scientific nomenclatural information;

Further recognizing that users of TDWG standards can benefit from content maintained in ZooBank;

Further recognizing that ICZN is in the process of drafting the next (Fifth) edition of the ICZN Code, and that this new Code will most likely rely more heavily on robust, standardized nomenclatural (meta)data within ZooBank;



It is resolved that:

- The ICZN will more actively engage with the TDWG community through the participation of representatives of ICZN (including current and former Commissioners and others with extensive experience working with the ICZN Code) in relevant TDWG standards interest groups and task groups;
- Further, TDWG will facilitate coordination between ICZN representatives, representatives of other major Codes of biological nomenclature, and members of the broader TDWG Community in developing (meta)data standards that reflect rules of scientific nomenclature and have practical value for any other data resources that incorporate scientific names of organisms;
- Further, ICZN will consult with the TDWG community and associated (meta)data standards when developing relevant language within the draft Fifth Edition of the ICZN Code, as well as policies associated with ZooBank, to have, when possible, nomenclatural (meta)data well-structured and compatible with relevant TDWG standards;

It is further resolved that:

Continued development of the data model implemented in ZooBank will, to the maximum extent practicable; conform to existing and emerging TDWG (meta)data standards;

Further; continued development of relevant (meta)data standards within TDWG will strive to accommodate the informatics needs of scientific nomenclature, as distinct from taxonomic concepts, in ways that accurately and precisely reflect the Codes of scientific nomenclature;

Further; this MoU is prepared for a period of six (6) years. During that period, either party may cancel or renegotiate the details, and any successor MoU will automatically imply expiration of the older version.



Signatories:

Thomas Pape
President of ICZN

Date: 26 May 2025

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Thomas Pape'.

David Bloom
Chair of TDWG

Date: 25 May 2025

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'David Bloom'.

25 May 2025