

Deep-Sea Taxonomy under Pressure

DOSI was represented by Dr Tammy Horton during this important discussion meeting on the future of deep-sea taxonomy.

A quarter of all species described on our planet are threatened with extinction due to human activities*, yet most deep-sea animals are not yet even known to science.

The deep ocean, the largest environment on Earth, is one of the most diverse ecosystems where wondrously bizarre life forms abound. It is at risk from pressures including fishing, pollution, climate change and mining. There is a danger that large numbers of species will go extinct before they are even discovered. We urgently need to understand the deep-sea environment and the species that live there in order to conserve and manage it.

Taxonomists provide the critical baseline knowledge. Their discovery and description of unknown species is at the heart of biology. Finding means of accelerating and sustaining this fundamental work, has been the focus of a workshop at the Senckenberg Research Institute and Natural History Museum Frankfurt.

Twenty-seven deep-sea scientists from twelve countries, devoted to deep-sea biodiversity discovery, participated in the international meeting. They discussed strategies to tackle the increasing pressures faced by taxonomists. The scientists call for improved collaboration and standardization of open-access data repositories as well as substantially increased funding for taxonomic projects and positions. The need for technological development of biodiversity discovery in the deep sea is clear. The workshop was a great success and has provided the momentum for this group to develop strategies for the future of deep-sea taxonomy.

Suggested reading:

*UN report media release: <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>



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