

2009 Training session on FishBase and Fish Taxonomy

organised by the Department of African Zoology-
Ichthyology Unit
of the Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium

Call for applications for 5 scholarships

Period of submission of the applications : from Sept 15, 2008 till Nov 28, 2008

Training session : from March 9 to May 29, 2009

1. General context

The Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) at Tervuren (Belgium) is part of the FishBase Consortium and responsible for the fresh- and brackish water fishes of Africa. FishBase is currently the most important online encyclopaedia on fishes and incorporates also many tools for ichthyologists and fisheries biologists. The FishBase programme in the RMCA includes a.o. a continuous update of scientific information on the African ichthyofauna.

Through an agreement with the Belgian Development Cooperation and as part of the FishBase programme, the RMCA has **five grants available for a training program** in the use of FishBase and the taxonomy of African fishes.

2. Characteristics

The training includes three subsets

- ✓ A **detailed explanation of FishBase** in all its aspects, illustrating the encyclopaedic character and the use of all tools
- ✓ A **training in the taxonomy of African fishes**, including identification exercises, working with keys, the proper curation of collections, morphological examination of specimens and data analysis
- ✓ A **case study** based on data from FishBase or on taxa for which taxonomic problems have been encountered in FishBase.

The main focus of the training will be on fish biodiversity data and their integration into FishBase, on how to use FishBase and on how to contribute. The context of these contributions may vary and can also include the knowledge of common names, fish ecology, fisheries statistics, aquaculture and many other areas of fish biology, according to the expertise of the candidate.

Applicants should afterwards be able to make their own contribution to fish biology and to continue to work with FishBase. They will be encouraged to teach their newly apprehended skills to new/local users, to help in completing the database and keeping it up to date, and to spread the use of FishBase as a source of information and as a fisheries tool. A long-term collaboration between the candidate, his/her home institute and the RMCA and FishBase is envisaged.

3. Target group

African scientists with an interest and expertise in African fishes, preferably freshwater fishes, and their biology.

4. Eligibility criteria

Only applications from people with residency in Sub-Saharan Africa and working for an institution, ministry, research institute or university can be taken into consideration. Applications from consultants or individuals cannot be accepted.

Priority will be given to candidates from the following countries : Cameroun, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Ouganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Scientists with a diploma other than M.Sc or PhD. should demonstrate a record of substantial work related to ichthyology.

All applications will be subject to an evaluation by internal experts.

The training staff may formulate specific conditions for the sharing of existing data with successful applicants.

In addition to the candidate's CV, the following questions will be used for evaluation of the application :

- (1) What is the level of direct or indirect benefits of the training for the candidate for his/her future studies on fish biodiversity and what is the intention for the use and support of FishBase?
- (2) What are the prospects for continued co-operation between the applicant (and/or his/her institution) and the RMCA, and how much mutual benefit can be expected?

Language skills

This call is for **English speaking scientists only** (A training session in French will be organised in 2010). A good command of English is requested in case it would not be the mother tongue or the language of education of the applicant.

Gender equality

The RMCA grants special attention to the participation of women in its study visit programs.

5. Instructions for application

A complete application file consists of :

1. the application form, which can be downloaded from the RMCA internet site at the following address: www.africamuseum.be (in the cooperation section from the research institute). This application form has to be completed, dated and signed by the applicant.

2. a separate motivation letter outlining

- why you consider yourself a good candidate for this training,
- what would be the benefits of your training to your home institute,
- what is the level of direct or indirect benefits of the training for you in future studies on fish biodiversity,
- what is the intention for the usage and support of FishBase.

3. a letter from your employer (research institution, ministry, university,...) authorizing your participation in the requested training, confirming your current position within the institution and indicating a commitment to make good use of the newly acquired expertise. This letter must be dated and signed (+ stamp of the institution). The name, position and address of the author of the letter must be clearly mentioned.

4. a letter of recommendation indicating, amongst others, why you are particularly well placed or suited for this training. This letter must be dated and signed with clear mention of the name, position and address of the person.

5. copies of relevant diplomas,

6. 1 recent passport photograph.

In case of selection, the applicant will have to submit a certificate of good behaviour (or equivalent).

Only complete application files will be taken into consideration. No additional information communicated afterwards will be accepted, unless upon specific request from the RMCA.

The complete application file should reach the following email address before November 29, 2008 (deadline) : E-mail : muriel.van.nuffel@africamuseum.be

Applications per email are preferred. If not possible, a paper copy of the application file can be send per regular mail to the following postal address (file must arrive before the deadline):

Ms. Muriel Van Nuffel, Training and Study Visit Coordinator
Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13
B 3080 Tervuren, Belgique

Reception of application files will only be acknowledged by e-mail to the e-mail address to be mentioned in the application form. This acknowledgement will be done shortly after the application form is received.

All applicants will be personally informed of the results of the selection process by the end of December 2008. Successful applicants will have to send their original file per regular mail.

7. Scholarship conditions

Duration :

Training session of 3 months, from March 9, 2009 until May 29, 2009.

Travel expenses :

The RMCA will provide one round-trip ticket (economy class).
Some expenses related to visa obtention will be reimbursed.

Allowances :

- Daily allowance of 30€ covering board, individual transport, and personal expenses of the selected applicant,
- fee to cover shipping costs (to the country of origin) of educational material received during the study period up to a maximum of 194€ (upon request of the curator),
- lodging provided by the RMCA.

Insurance :

The RMCA will provide insurance for the selected applicants. The insurance will cover :

1. medical and accident insurance (this insurance does not cover medical care related to pre-existing diseases, nor does it cover medical expenses related to pregnancies and/or births),
2. third-party liability,
3. repatriation insurance.