BioNet naming protocol

Defining product and
system names

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1.1 Introduction

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) currently manages several systems and products relating to biodiversity data, many of which have been developed independently over the years and have been progressively transferred to the Biodiversity Information Systems team (BIST) for management. This includes the Atlas of NSW Wildlife, BioNetAtlas, NSW Vegetation Information system and more recently the Threatened Species web application. The inconsistent use of legacy product and system names has resulted in ambiguity and confusion for users.

1.2 The purpose of this document

This document outlines an overarching BioNet brand structure and streamlined naming protocol for BioNet data products and applications.

1.3 What is the problem?

The existing names are not logical and are hampering users' efforts to discover and access data products. The problem is caused by both a lack of a clear overarching brand, as well ambiguity and inconsistency around terminology for the names of the data products and applications. This inconsistency is then reflected in unnecessary complex user advice and web site content design.

Since the year 2000, biodiversity applications have undergone significant development and reconfiguration (Figure 1). 'Atlas of NSW Wildlife', originally a repository for the species sightings, has been expanded to house several other data collections including systematic flora and fauna survey and threatened species profiles. This has involved the integration of VIS Flora Survey database and the Threatened Species Profile database respectively with the legacy database names retained as module names. In addition to this the name of the Atlas of NSW Wildlife' changed to BioNet Atlas.

Some of the data contained within BioNet Atlas is available via multiple systems; for example, the threatened species data is managed as a module in the Bionet-Atlas web application 'TS Profiles', while the content is also available via the <u>Threatened Species web app</u>. A framework is required for describing the common underlying data collections that are available to users via the two applications.

Some of the names applied to individual data collections are ambiguous. For example, the term 'Threatened species profiles' is misleading as the collection also contains profiles for populations, communities and key threatening processes.

Also, aside from the names of products used, there are many different terms used to describe the types of products that are being referenced. For example, is it a dataset, data collection, database, system or other? These terms are often used inconsistently.

User feedback gathered from both the BioNet User Satisfaction survey (Feb 2015) and direct contact with customers via the BioNet Support Centre identified a range of issues regarding information on biodiversity data available on the OEH website, including:

- feeling overwhelmed by the amount of biodiversity data content on the OEH website
- finding it difficult to locate information on BioNet, and
- ambiguity and inconsistencies in the use of terminology and product names.

Another key driver that has highlighted these issues is the biodiversity reform and the need to standardise product names so they are clearly and consistently referenced in legislation. In particular, there is no clear and consistent distinction between the name of the data and the systems where people access and contribute the data. Given technology changes at a far greater pace than legislation, referencing the system that houses the data in legislation can result in the need to hold on to outdated names to keep consistency with legislation.
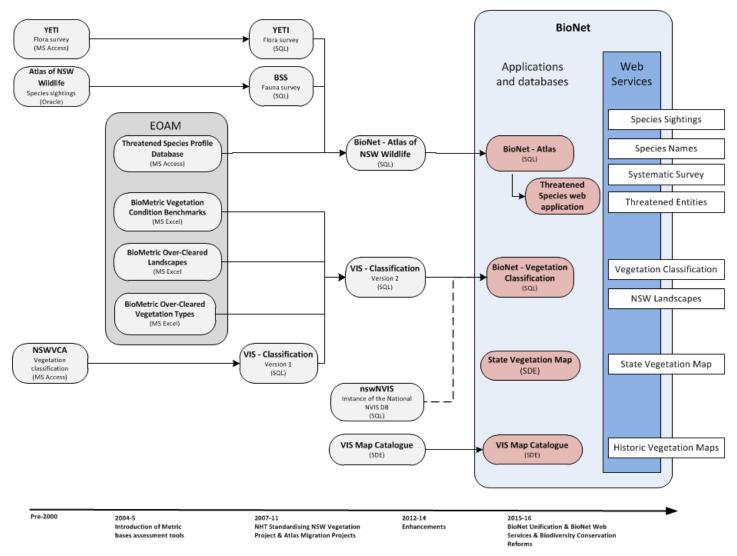
Figure 1   Summary of NSW BioNet's development history

2. Objectives

2.1 Business objectives

- Improve discoverability of biodiversity information through a unified and simplified naming structure.
- Establish a clear, consistent and unambiguous set of data product names that reference all data collections managed under the BioNet umbrella.
- Ensure a clear distinction is made between the name of the data and the name of the system that houses the data.
- Ensure the revised set of data product names and branding structure applies to all OEH web content.
- Ensure the revised data product names are applied in legislation as part of the Biodiversity reforms process.
- Ensure that OEH staff, state and federal agencies, consultants, local councils, Local Land Services and educational institutions are aware of the new names and understand the distinction between data and system names.

3. Implementation

3.1 How are the revised names applied?

A naming framework is proposed for that helps users distinguishes between the data and the technology required to manage and access them (Table 1).

Table 1   Glossary of terminology for BioNet names

	Term	Definition
Data (what we hold)	**Repository**	The overarching term for the brand that applies to all data collections and associated datasets. BioNet is the repository for biodiversity data.
	Collection	A group of data that share similar attributes.
	Dataset	A unique name given to a group of data within a collection. Note that some collections can contain many different datasets, while some can contain only one dataset.
Interface (how you access)	**Application Program Interface**	An Application Program Interface (API) is technology for transmitting data over the Internet and allowing programmatic access to that data using standard Internet protocols. These protocols are used for system to system data access. It enables IT developers and system integrators to embed BioNet data directly into software applications.
	User Interface	A User Interface enables people to interact directly with the data through an application or website. This is the name of the web-based application that a person accesses or logins to, to utilise the data.

The rationale for separating the name of the data ('collection' and 'dataset') from the system that houses the data ('interface', 'application' and 'database') is to ensure the names for the data can remain unchanged regardless of the application the data sits in. This is particularly important given that changes to technology can happen at a faster pace than changes to the legislation that references the data, hence it is important to refer to the name of the data in legislation.

Table 2   Summary of BioNet data and system names

Data (what we hold)				Interface (how you access)	
Repository	Collection	Collection (abbrev.)	Dataset	User interface (UI)	Application program interface (API)
BioNet	Species Sightings	Sightings	For example, OEH BirdLife Australia Forests NSW	BioNet Atlas	BioNet Web Services
	Species Names	Species	Species Names	BioNet Atlas	BioNet Web Services
	Threatened Biodiversity Profiles	Threatened Biodiversity	Threatened Species Threatened Ecological Communities Key threatening processes Endangered Populations	Threatened Biodiversity Profiles BioNet Atlas	BioNet Web Services
	Systematic Surveys	Surveys	For example, Syd Metro flora survey Everlasting Swamp NP fauna survey	BioNet Atlas	
	Vegetation Classification	Classification	PCT Classification	BioNet Vegetation Classification	BioNet Web Services
	NSW Landscapes	Landscapes	Mitchell NSW Landscapes	BioNet Vegetation Classification	BioNet Web Services
	Vegetation Maps	Vegetation Maps	State Vegetation Type Maps Non-standardised Vegetation Type Maps Threatened Ecological Community Maps	OEH Open Data Portal	
	Distribution Maps	Species Distribution Maps	For example, BioNet indicative Threatened species distributions	OEH Open Data Portal	
		Threatened Ecological Community Distribution Maps	To be developed	OEH Open Data Portal	