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Biogeography - Contributions from systematics and collections

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Specimen-based information is crucial for exploring ecological and biogeographic patterns along both the taxonomic and geographic axes. However, significant challenges exist in determining the quality of specimen data and selecting records which are 'fit for purpose' for any given analysis. We are developing methods for detecting errors in existing specimen-based data by examining multiple data sources for inconsistencies. These inconsistencies can then be used to detect both errors and potentially interesting 'outlier' phenomena. Additionally, recent advances in modelling methods allow us to interpolate existing data to fill gaps in our biogeographic understanding of individual taxa. Combined, these methods provide robust datasets which can be reliably used to answer a wide range of biological questions.