

# One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish...

## By Tony Pitcher

The *Support unit for International Fisheries & Aquatic Research* (SIFAR – funded by a range of international development donor agencies), based alongside the Fisheries Department at FAO, is creating an open knowledge marketplace on the internet, specifically for the fisheries research and development community. Called the oneFish Community Directory, this open directory portal will bring together, under one virtual roof, a broad cross-section of stakeholders interested in raising the profile of research in fisheries and aquatic resources and reinforcing its impact in responsible fisheries, particularly in the field of development. oneFish ([www.onefish.org](http://www.onefish.org)) builds on the design philosophy of open content directories like Netscape's *Open Directory Project* which are rapidly proving their effectiveness in the face of growing net congestion. Like these, oneFish relies on volunteer category editors collaborating in the organisation of the site. These specialists, working either individually or organised into groups, will be responsible for the content quality of their particular portions of oneFish, culling out the bad and obsolete and keeping only the best.

SIFAR will host a small editorial team continuously to develop and manage the top-level categories, oversee the creation of new sub-categories and have absolute authority to add or remove inappropriate items.

### *What's new about oneFish?*

The thoroughly open, user-driven philosophy that oneFish adopts will be complemented by several innovative approaches to open directory design. Aside from its single thematic focus, oneFish will offer two new ways of managing and using information:

**Knowledge Objects** – These are information records, in any media format, entered and cross-referenced into any category of oneFish and include:

**Documents:** document-sharing and collaborative authoring; grey literature repository; upload, download documents in any format

## Expertise in Demand!

Congratulations to Dr Tony Pitcher on his appointment to a six year term on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Max-Planck-Institut für Limnologie in Plön, Germany. The Board meets once every two years and its role is to ensure the highest scientific standards for the work of the Institut. As a member of the venerable Board, Tony will join with the director of London's Kew Gardens and the President of Oxford University.

**Websites:** add web links (URLs) to related internet sites

**Discussion:** create or browse a oneFish forum; view a list of online discussion forums, mailing lists, and mailing list archives

**Maps:** GIS maps and geo-referenced databases of interest to fisheries researchers

**Projects:** a revised, open version of FAO's Fishery Project Information System which tracked all fisheries projects funded by development donors agencies up until 1995.

**Books:** can be added, viewed or ordered.

**Contacts:** any organisation, individual, or company can submit their contact information here.

**World Views** – These are a range of category taxonomies or 'pyramids' that provide different, yet complementary, ways of viewing knowledge objects. World Views allow multiple navigation paths relevant to a range of research disciplines and perspectives. They include top-down, bottom-up, geography, ecosystem, stakeholders and species.

oneFish also offers a powerful keyword-search facility for the entire Community Directory database. Additional interactive tools will category rating systems.

If oneFish attracts sufficient attention, it could soon present back to the fisheries research community the largest fully integrated global collection of information on fisheries research available.

## FishBase on the Web

By Daniel Pauly

FishBase, the global information system on fishes, is now available on the web ([www.fishbase.org/search.cfm](http://www.fishbase.org/search.cfm)). Until recently, most of the information in FishBase was contained in annually-updated CD-ROMs distributed with an annually-updated book. The latest release was FishBase 98, with 99 (in French) to be released later this year.

However, the FishBase team is now putting lots of emphasis to the Internet version of FishBase, which is expanded and updated daily. Thus, all aspects of FishBase dealing with the identity of fishes (scientific classification, common names, pictures, etc.) are now accessible on the web, as is an increasing amount of data on their biology (growth parameters, reproduction, etc.). Web access to this information is often faster than from the CD-ROM, and downloading data is much easier.

Do visit the site.