

DR JAMES L. EDWARDS

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Dr James Edwards is the Executive Secretary of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), an intergovernmental organisation devoted to making biodiversity data freely and openly available via the Internet.

Dr Edwards is also the Director of the GBIF Secretariat in Copenhagen, Denmark. He received his B.S. (1967) and Ph.D. (1976) degrees from the University of California at Berkeley. His research interests are the systematics and functional morphology of amphibians and fishes, and biodiversity informatics.

From 1974-1976, Dr Edwards was an Instructor in the Biology Department at Queens College of the City University of New York, and from 1976-1982 he was an Assistant and Associate Professor in the Zoology Department at Michigan State University.

In 1982, he took a position in the Directorate for Biological Sciences at the US National Science Foundation (NSF), which funds the vast majority of non-medical biological research at US colleges and universities. While at the NSF, he served successively as Program Director for several programs (Systematic Biology, Biological Research Resources, Field Stations and Marine Laboratories, and Biotic Surveys and Inventories), as Deputy Division Director for Biotic Systems and Resources, and as Deputy Assistant Director for Biological Sciences. In the latter capacity, he was the second-in-command of a yearly budget of approximately \$500 million.

Dr Edwards served on several Federal task forces, and was the chair of an interagency steering committee on Biological and Ecological Informatics. He also chaired a working group on Biological Informatics of the Megascience Forum of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which in 1999 recommended the formation of the GBIF. Dr Edwards then chaired the Interim Steering Committee, which developed the Memorandum of Understanding for the organisation and recruited the requisite number of governmental members and funding to allow it to come into existence in March, 2001.

Currently, he is on a five-year leave of absence from NSF in order to serve as the Executive Secretary of GBIF.