

NOW

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Dear Member of the NOW Advisory Board,

Work on the NOW database continues more or less on schedule. The plans to create a joint web site with a public version of NOW-ETE-FAUNMAP data have advanced and next year it will probably be possible to access a recent version of the public set of NOW data with a common web browser (such as Netscape). The databasing of Chinese late Cenozoic mammal localities is proceeding in good order. The HOMINET has so far revised the Greek (Louis de Bonis) and Italian (Lorenzo Rook) localities. Revised and much larger datasets are expected soon for Spain, France and Germany. A new acquisition is a dataset of "Soviet" mammal localities from Central Asia, entered unrevised from the published literature by Diana Pushkina at Helsinki. We hope that revision of this dataset can begin soon, under the guidance of Inessa Vislobokova. And last but certainly not least, the overhaul of the small mammal data coordinated by Hans de Bruijn has recently accelerated and will soon enter an active phase.

New plans for the future include a joint research program with Nick Shackleton and Johan Meulenkamp, regarding Ecosystem Response to Physical Perturbations in the Neogene of Eurasia. Of NOW board members Fritz Steininger, Juha Pekka Lunkka and Mikael Fortelius have been involved in the early planning of this program, in which the NOW database will play a central role. Please let us know if you are interested in active participation in such a venture. Another new initiative, coordinated by Peter Andrews and John Damuth involves the addition of Recent mammals to the NOW database and the creation of auxiliary tables to contain quantitative ecomorphological information that cannot presently be entered into the NOW database. A key person in this project is Sylvia Hixson.

A situation of ongoing revision is what we expect to live with as long as the NOW database remains healthy. We therefore send you lists for checking, despite the fact that some overlapping revision will result. Please correct what you feel able to handle and let us know if we have sent you the wrong lists, or if you would like to redefine your position on the NOW board. Please also let us know of additional people who would like to (or should) be involved, of address changes, etc. Finally, please do not forget that the NOW data are almost entirely public and yours to use!

With my very best wishes, and hoping to hear from you soon,

Mikael Fortelius