

Dear Members of the NOW Advisory Board,
Dear NOW Community,

Happy New Year! The beginning of the year was busy at the Helsinki Office with some thriller elements. The long-lived NOW web address was about to be discontinued and Kari did a wonderful job to move and uplift the website. Have a look! NOW is now accessible via <https://nowdatabase.org/>, there old web address has a redirect, which will stay operational for foreseeable future. At the same time the communication protocol has been upgraded to https (was http), which means encrypted communication over the web. The website is physically hosted at the Finnish Museum of Natural History, where Kari continues to maintain it.

We also collected historical NOW newsletters, at least those that were still easily available, they are now at <https://nowdatabase.org/now/news/>. Some are quite amusing :)

Overall, NOW infrastructure consists of three main parts: the website, the user interface (it can be accessed directly at <http://pantodon.science.helsinki.fi/now/> or via links from the website), and the database itself (accessed by public via user interface). The latter two components were not part of this website move. The database itself is hosted at a Helsinki-based service provider. The user interface so far has been maintained by volunteers and, when possible and necessary, by external developers on hourly bases for some hours per year.

Another big news is NOW book. The book is now approved at Springer, it will be nearly 400 pages long! Over 30 chapter proposals were received and the volume was stretched to the maximum, which unfortunately means that several chapters could not be included. The guest editors -- Isaac Casanovas Vilar, Lars van den Hoek Ostende, Christine Janis and Juha Saarinen did a great and difficult job selecting the contributions, structuring the book and writing up a detailed proposal to Springer. Thanks to all! The question of funding making the book open access is still pending. Any ideas are most welcome.

The NOW anniversary meeting, as already announced, will take place in Barcelona (Sabadell) in December 2021. Thanks again to Isaac Casanovas Vilar and David Alba as well as other colleagues in Barcelona for hosting it.

Expansion of the NOW Advisory Board is ongoing. Several experts joined since the last newsletter: welcome to Christopher Beard (Asian non-catarrhines), Raef Minwer Barakat (Omomyiformes and Adapiformes), Sergi Lopez-Torres (Plesiadapiforms), Michelle Arnal (Basal caviomorphs and octodontoid rodents), Siobhan Cooke (Platyrrhine primates) and Daniel García López (Paleogene of Northwest Argentina). The Emeritus Board has not been formalized yet, but all the wishes and concerns are recorded.

As for data development, it has been busy as usual. Active revisions of small mammals are taking place, lead by Isaac Casanovas Vilar and Lars van den Hoek Ostende. Among other updates, a big bulk of synonyms raised after Bratislava has now been implemented by Kari. Alexandros Xafis has made a large update on giraffes. We just had a working session in Helsinki with Liu Liping and Anu Kaakinen revising stratigraphy and timing of a set of Chinese localities. We also finished updates of

paleomag time bounds (following Gradstein et al 2012). Following the NOW time unit gathering in October, paleomag is now deactivated from the absolute age menu and remains as time units. Following the same gathering, regional zonation of Spain is being implemented, it's in good progress. The Pleistocene project is coming together, but there is still a long way to go. Overall, the horizon of things to do looks plentiful and no risk of boredom is in sight on the NOW factory floor.

I now hope I did not forget important news items, but if so, they will come next time. Please get in touch if you have ideas, suggestions or complaints, about NOW and the world in general. Maybe not about the global crises. But I hope all goes well.

Looking forward to meeting many of you in Barcelona or earlier.

Best regards,
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