A global network of researchers engaged in an international collaborative initiative to assess and explain the diversity, distribution, and abundance of marine life in the oceans – past, present, and future – and to identify the current limits to knowledge (what is known, unknown and unknowable)

The First Census: 2000-2010
A likely new species of the rare deep-sea sponge crab genus *Homolodormia*. Photo: Tin-Yam Chan, National Taiwan Ocean University, Keelung

A new species of the spider-like squat lobster of the genus *Chirostylus* which generally associated with deep-water corals. Photo: Tin-Yam Chan, National Taiwan Ocean University, Keelung

This previously undescribed species of “Medusa” worm (family siboglinidiae) was found on the Gulf of Cadiz mud volcanoes. Photo: Ana Hilario, University of Aveiro.
Grand Challenge Questions

Oceans Past
What did live in the oceans?
History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP)

Oceans Present
What does live in the oceans?
Ocean Realm Field Projects

Oceans Future
What will live in the oceans?
Future of Marine Animal Populations (FMAP)

Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS)
Web-based provider of global geo-referenced information on marine species
A national, regional and international infrastructure for information and biogeographic data on marine species and their distribution and abundance

OBIS provides, on an ‘open access’ basis through the World Wide Web:

- taxonomically and geographically resolved data on marine life and the ocean environment;
- interoperability with similar databases;
- software tools for data exploration and analysis.
Currently in OBIS (July 2010):
27.7 million records of 114,000 species from 817 databases

2009: 21.9 million records
2008: 16.7 million records
2007: 13.6 million records
2006: 10 million records
2005: 5 million records
OBIS can show us biodiversity hotspots.

Image: E. Vanden Berghe, Rutgers University
And OBIS can show us gaps in knowledge.

Image: Google, based on OBIS datasets
On June 24, 2009 the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission accepted OBIS as a program under the International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE).

Although the Secretariat of OBIS will remain at Rutgers University, this new status within IOC will help to ensure the global use and maintenance of OBIS into the future.
OBIS has the potential to produce maps like these for the EEZ of all countries.