
Computer Corner

The TEX module is one of several data bases within COMMON, which is the "corporate data base" of the Service. With the recent installation of COMMON "on-line" Servicewide the TEX module also became available for use.

TEX will allow the exchange of selected information on federally listed Threatened and Endangered species and on eXotic species. It is not meant to serve as a primary data base for detailed park species information at the park level. A microcomputer software package will be designed to try to satisfy that need at a later date.

Individuals interested in a particular species will be able to use TEX to find out: (1) at what parks the species occurs, (2) the status of the species in each park, (3) what kinds of projects or activities are being carried out at parks, such as research, monitoring, captive breeding, reintroduction, habitat protection or, in the case of exotic pests, eradication or control programs, and (4) what publications relating to these species have been produced under the auspices of NPS. The individual can then contact a park or regional office for additional information on activities or publications of special interest.

WASO has responsibility for entering data on taxonomy and data element definitions. The other data must be entered and updated by the parks themselves and/or by the regional offices. Security is such that parks can enter only their own data. Regional offices can enter data for any of their own parks. WASO can enter any of the files, if necessary.

However, everyone has the capability of reading, or viewing, any of the information in the data base at any time. As with other modules of COMMON, TEX species information is available through standard (preprogrammed) or customized (individualized) reports. Presently there are four preprogrammed reports available in TEX. These can be used to derive information on the various TEX species topics mentioned earlier. Where applicable, these reports offer the user the option of having the information presented on a single park, for a region or Servicewide.

For variations on these standard TEX species reports, or for different kinds of readouts entirely, customized reports can be developed by the use of RELATE-3000, the data base management software package of COMMON. Customized reports also allow a link-up between TEX and other modules of COMMON, including one on park pest management (PESTS) and another on park flora (NPFLORA). With these links different kinds of data can be brought together in a variety of ways to answer a wide range of questions relating to park issues. To do this the user will have to become familiar with some of the basic commands of the RELATE language. This aspect of data retrieval is discussed in the user's manual for COMMON, which is now available Servicewide.

As with other portions of COMMON, the completeness of the TEX data base is dependent upon the willingness of parks and regional offices to enter data describing their park into the system. It is our hope that the parks and regional offices will find this basic

TEX species information useful and that all units will cooperate in providing current data on their species for Servicewide exchange.

The first demonstration of COMMON, including the TEX module, was given in May at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Philadelphia. It was followed by one in June at the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta. Similar demonstration workshops are planned for each Region during the summer. For further information you may contact Nick Chura, WASO Science Support Staff (FTS 343-8123 or (202) 343-8123); or Trish Patterson, SERO Resources Management Specialist (FTS 242-4916 or (404) 331-4916). For more information on COMMON in general, or on the scheduled COMMON workshop for your Region, contact Keith Carr, WASO Information and Data Systems Division (FTS 343-4463 or (202) 343-4463) or your Regional ADP Coordinator.

Nick Chura, WASO Science Support Staff.

See also North Atlantic Regional Highlights for Computer News.