

The goal of the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) is to support natural resource decision-making by providing relevant, timely and credible scientific knowledge on the state of provincial biodiversity. One of the services offered by the ABMI is to provide access to information products. This policy describes the terms, conditions, and limitations surrounding the distribution and use of ABMI information products.

Access to Information Policy

The ABMI's information products will be supplied to any person(s) or organization(s) that desire ABMI products regardless of the intended use of the information. This is referred to by the ABMI as "publicly accessible" information. This policy position is designed to ensure that the ABMI maintains transparent operations, achieves the highest scientific credibility, and provides significant value to Albertans.

The ABMI claims no ownership of knowledge or products generated through the use of ABMI information products.

Products Covered by this Policy

The following ABMI information products are covered by this policy:

Raw Data – The ABMI collects abiotic and biotic data using numerous field and remote sensing protocols. After undergoing quality control by the ABMI, the data is publicly available without further modification. Raw data is publicly accessible at the scale of individual points.

Compiled Data – The ABMI summarizes and standardizes many raw data variables into forms that better support the business needs of stakeholders. Compiled data is generated using simple summary algorithms that produce slightly refined versions of raw data (e.g., converting raw species count data into estimates of abundance). Compiled data and methods used to conduct the summaries are publicly accessible. Compiled data is publicly accessible at the scale of individual points.

Status and Trends Data – The ABMI produces value-added products describing the status and trends of Alberta's biodiversity. Status and trend data is generated using advanced algorithms, such as the biodiversity index, that produce a highly refined version of the ABMI's raw data. Status and trend data, and the methods used to conduct the summaries, are publicly accessible. Status and trend data is publicly accessible at the scale of 50 ABMI points or greater.

Data Collection Protocols – The ABMI produces and maintains numerous protocols to conduct field and remote sensing data collection. These protocols are publicly accessible.

Reports – The ABMI produces a number of reports annually that are relevant to the Institute's business needs. These reports are publicly accessible.

Photographic Images – The ABMI collects and maintains photographs that are relevant to the Institute's business needs. Photographs to which the ABMI holds copyright are publicly accessible provided that appropriate reference and credits are given in any subsequent use of the images. Credit should be

structured to include: The photographer's name and affiliation, and the URL for the ABMI or appropriate agency/organization. For example, “photographers name, ABMI, www.abmi.ca”.

Exemptions to Publicly Accessible Information.

Exemptions to this policy are employed in circumstances where providing public access to ABMI information can cause harm to the Institute’s business including:

Survey Site Locations – The precise geographic coordinates of the ABMI’s survey site locations are not publicly accessible. Nor are any other ABMI information products that can cause to communicate the precise geographic coordinates of the ABMI’s survey site locations.

Management activities that occur at the ABMI’s site locations must be unbiased for the ABMI to remain an unbiased measure of biodiversity and human footprint in the province. Knowledge of the ABMI’s site locations may cause land managers to intentionally (or unintentionally) conduct (or not conduct) specific management activities around these locations. This would seriously compromise the scientific integrity of the ABMI.

Public geographic coordinates for each ABMI survey site location are publicly accessible. Public coordinates identify the location of each survey site to within 4 km of the precise geographic coordinate (or 50 km²; i.e., the ABMI’s precise geographic coordinate is within 4 km of the public geographic coordinate).

Private Land Owners – The identity of private land owners that host an ABMI survey site location is not publicly accessible. Nor are any other ABMI information products that can cause to communicate the identity of private land owners that host an ABMI survey site location.

Rare and Endangered Species in the White Area – The location of rare and endangered species in the White Area will be made publicly accessible at a broad scale only (e.g., greater than 1 ABMI point).

Private land owners and disposition holders in the White Area have expressed concern that information products about rare and endangered species might be traced back to precise land holding and, therefore, cause material harm to their operations. The decision to release rare and endangered species information at broad scale offers additional anonymity to land owners and dispositions holders in the White Area.

Custody and Release of Third-party Data – From time-to-time, the ABMI will accept and host data from third-party data contributors. Data contributors can request that the public release of this data be delayed by up to 6 years from the date that the ABMI accepts the data.

ABMI value-added services that incorporate third-party data will not be available to data contributors until the contributed data becomes publicly accessible. At which time the data contributor and the public will have equal access to the data and value added services. Additional terms and conditions that apply to the acceptance and hosting of third-party data are described in a separate ABMI policy document.

Third-party Custody of Copyrighted Material – From time-to-time, the ABMI will host material to which copyright is held by a third party. The ABMI respects this copyright in perpetuity and will adhere to the wishes of the copyright holder regarding product distribution. In instances where third-party material is hosted by the ABMI, and where the copyright holder does not wish the material to be freely distributed, the ABMI will direct inquires to the copyright holder.

About Accessing ABMI Information Products

Quality Assurance – The ABMI applies rigorous quality control to all information products before they are made publicly accessible. Only products that pass the Institutes quality control are made available to the public.

How to Obtain Data – The ABMI’s information products are made available through a single web portal or via web services. Some ABMI reports may be available for distribution in hard copy.

Timing of Product Availability – The ABMI makes every effort to release information products in a timely manner while adhering to rigorous quality control. In general, ABMI information products are expected to become publicly accessible within 9 months of collection or production. The ABMI’s information products become available to all stakeholders and the public at the same time.

Access to Exempted Information – Requests for ABMI information products that are exempted from public accessibility will be evaluated by the ABMI on a case-by-case basis. However, ABMI site locations that occur on private land will not be shared with anyone outside the ABMI. The ABMI takes all reasonable steps to maintain and protect the anonymity of private land owners that partner with the Institute.

Terms of Use

Acknowledgement – Use of ABMI data or information products requires that the ABMI be acknowledged as the source of information. Acknowledgements should be structured to include the Institute’s name, website address, and the type of information used. For example, the ABMI might be acknowledged using the following format: Raw breeding bird data (2004-2006 inclusive) from the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute was used, in whole or part, to create this product. More information on the Institute can be found at: <http://www.abmi.ca>.

Disclosure – The ABMI strongly recommends that any use of the Institute’s information products include the following statements of disclosure:

1. the version and type of ABMI data used,
2. if appropriate, the type and source of additional, non-ABMI data used in analysis,
3. a full description of data analysis, and
4. the person(s) or organization(s) conducting the analysis.

Disclaimer

The ABMI assumes no liability in connection with the information products or services made available by the Institute. While every effort is made to ensure the information contained in these products and services is correct, the ABMI disclaims any liability in negligence or otherwise for any loss or damage which may occur as a result of reliance on any of this material. All information products and services are subject to change by the ABMI without notice. This policy is subject to fees and other policies as determined by the ABMI Board of Directors and may be revised from time-to-time.

Prototype Data

Between 2003 and 2006, the ABMI collected a significant amount of data as part of a 4-year prototype proof-of-concept phase. All data collected during the prototype phase is subject to this access policy.