



California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Biogeographic Information and Observation System

BIOS Data Viewer

Frequently Asked Questions

September 5, 2013

Q: Does it make any difference which internet browser I use?

A: Yes, we have found that the BIOS viewer runs best in Firefox or Chrome. It will run in Internet Explorer, but there can be issues with a few of the tools performing appropriately in this browser.

Q: Why does it ask me to log in?

A: Each dataset in BIOS is assigned a level of security. The majority of the datasets are available to the public, but some are restricted for a variety of reasons. You must log in to access the secured datasets. An example of this would be our California Natural Diversity Database which is available in the BIOS viewer as part of the CNDDDB subscription service. (More information on the CNDDDB is available at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/>).

Access to these secure datasets is managed by using assigned user names and passwords. CDFW users can log in using their usual department log in information and CNDDDB subscribers can log in using the monthly user name and password that is emailed to them.

No log in is required to access the hundreds of publically available datasets in the BIOS viewer.

Q: How do I add data to my map?

A: Click in the Add Data input box at the top of the viewer and a drop-down list will appear showing you all of the available data layers. You can scroll down the list and select the one that you would like to add.

Click once on the title of the dataset to display the metadata in the Table of Contents on the left side of the viewer. Double click on the dataset name and the layer will load into the map.

You can also type the name of the dataset that you would like to add in the Add Data box or enter a search term such as a dataset number (ds#) or a species name. You will see the drop-down list redraw dynamically as you type to include only those datasets that meet your criteria.

Q: Where is the toolbar / Where did all of the tools go?

A: All of the tools from the previous version of the BIOS Viewer are still available in the new version. They have been arranged into the three drop-down menus that you see at the top of the screen.

The Quick Tools menu contains tools that interact with the text box to the right of the menu. It contains tools such as the Add Data tool mentioned above, the Locate Address tool and the Add KML tool.

The Interactive Map Tools menu contains tools that interact directly with the map itself such as the Select tool, the Identify Features tool and the Measure Distance tool.

The Advanced Tools menu contains tools that open a pop-up window requesting user input for more advanced analysis. Tools such as the Query Builder tool, the Layer Filter tool and the Waypoint tool can be found here.

To use a tool in BIOS, you must first select the layer that you want to use the tool on in the Layers tab of the Table of Contents on the left side panel of the viewer, making it the Active Layer. Once you have an Active Layer to work with you can select and use your tool. The current Active Layer is indicated by a solid pink box around the layer name in the Layers list.

Q: I have added a layer to my map but I do not see it. How do I make it draw?

A: To draw the data, simply check on the small box to the left of the name of the dataset in the Table of Contents. We have some very large and complex datasets in BIOS, so we do not draw them automatically when they are loaded into the map. This gives you a chance to zoom in to your area of interest first improving both the performance of the viewer and the legibility of the data.

Q: Can I add imagery as a background in my map?

A: You can change the background map to any map available under the Basemap tab in the Table of Contents on the left side of the viewer window. Choices include imagery, street maps, topographic maps and several years of NAIP imagery among other options. The default basemap that is loaded when the viewer opens is the ESRI World Topographic Map.

Q: Where is the map legend?

A: A symbology legend is available for each data layer in the Table of Contents. Click on the **+** to the left of the Layer name and check box. A drop-down legend will appear below the layer name showing each type of symbol used to display that dataset in the map.

Q: Can I change the symbology for a data layer?

A: No, that functionality is not available in the viewer at this time.

Q: How do I remove a data layer from the map?

A: Click on the **X** button after the data layer name in the Table of Contents to remove the layer from your map.

Q: I closed the table displaying my query results. How do I get it back?

A: You can reopen the table by clicking the **T** button next to the layer name in the Graphics and Selections section of the Table of Contents.

Q: Can I download the data from BIOS?

A: Most of the publicly viewable data is available for download from our FTP site. Follow this link http://bios.dfg.ca.gov/dataset_index.asp for a list of available datasets. Click the BIOS FTP site link at the top of the page to access the data. Datasets are posted on the FTP site by dataset number (ds#). You can find the ds# for a particular dataset by looking after the dataset name in the list.

If a dataset is not available for download from the FTP site, you will need to contact the person listed as the point of contact in the metadata for that dataset to make your request.

Q: How can I get my data into BIOS?

A: If you have data that you would like to add to the BIOS data catalog, please read the guidelines for submitting data at http://bios.dfg.ca.gov/submitting_data.asp and then contact the [BIOS Coordinator](#).

Q: Is there a way to load my GPS points into the map?

A: Yes, you can load your GPS waypoints into the map using the Waypoints tool in the Advanced Tools drop-down menu. They must be stored in a comma separated values (CSV) format on your computer in order for the tool to load them.

Q: I have an idea for an enhancement to the viewer. Who should I contact?

A: Please email any comments, suggestions or questions to the BIOS group at bios@wildlife.ca.gov .

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