

Manual for Kotka

This is the user manual for Kotka Collection Management System. Some of the documentation is available only in Finnish.

[Käyttöohje suomeksi](#) (in Finnish)

[Description of data fields](#)

General features

Kotka is used with a web browser at <https://kotka.luomus.fi/>. Using it requires a Luomus username and password. All data traffic between user and Kotka are encrypted.

A testing version is available at <https://kotatest.luomus.fi/> - you can use this to practice how to use Kotka.

Users and groups

All users belong to one or more groups. (In Luomus, a group is basically same as a team.) An user can edit the data that is owned by one of her teams. Data owned by other teams can be seen by all logged-in users, but not edited.

Log in to Kotka using your Luomus username and password, or your Haka login. Your username has to be activated before you use Kotka for the first time. Contact kotka@luomus.fi to do this.

If you forget your Luomus password, contact kotka@luomus.fi

If you are using Kotka from your museum computer or laptop, you don't need to log off from Kotka (logging off from your Windows account is enough). If you use Kotka from a computer that is used by other people also (e.g. in a different museum), please log off when you are done.

Automatically saved data

Whenever data is saved to Kotka, some fields are filled in automatically. These include:

- Who created the data (a specimen, for example) in the first place
- Who was the last editor
- When was the data created
- When was the data edited last time

In addition, all versions of the data is recorded in the database. All past changes and who did them can be reconstructed from this history data, so if someone accidentally erases something, it can be restored.

Data

Kotka handles several types of data:

- **Specimens** - Data about specimens and observations
- **Accessions and Events** - Botanic garden living collections
- **Samples** - Tissue and DNA samples
- **Collections** - Metadata about natural history collections and databases
- **Datasets** - Used to group specimens together
- **Organizations** - Organizations and their contact information
- **Transactions** - Loans, gifts and exchanges. (Connects specimens to organizations.)

Collections

In the collections-section you can view, edit and add metadata about a collection. Collection is a **permanently defined and tangible set of data or specimens**; for example "V. F. Brotherus Herbarium" and "Winter Bird Census" are collections. Collections are organized hierarchically: a collection can have many sub-collections (but a collection cannot have many parent collections). For example: *Collections of the Finnish Museum of Natural History LUOMUS > Collections of the Botanical Museum > Fungi > Lichenes externi.*

A specimen has to belong to exactly one collection.

Kotka stores about collection, among other things:

- Name, description, type
- Taxonomic, temporal and geographic coverage
- Copyrights, person responsible
- Size

This information is preserved so that we would have good knowledge about what kind of collections there are, how they can be used, who owns them and so forth. When entering collection data, try to think what you would like to remember about it after a few years?

Datasets

Dataset is a conceptual group of specimens, which you want for some reason to keep separate from other specimens. A specimen can belong to zero, one or many datasets.

For example, dataset can be

- Specimens from a certain expedition ('Expedition to South Georgia Island, January 1995')
- Specimens donated by someone ('Coll J. Doe')
- Specimens used in a research project or publication

First create a new dataset with a descriptive name. Then connect specimens to the dataset. Afterwards, specimens belonging to a single dataset can be easily searched.

Organizations

Organization data is used mainly for managing [transactions](#).