

THE ACM93 SMALL BODIES DATA BASES

The papers in this section present data bases on the solar system small bodies. The idea was not to create a single centralized data base, not even a single provider of the data. Centralized data bases run the risk of being too rigid, and therefore of becoming very quickly obsolete. On the contrary in a such a rapidly moving field of research the guarantee that the data bases will be continuously updated is more important than the guarantee of stability of the data. Therefore we are here only providing the information on the existence of data bases which are maintained and upgraded by the people who created them. The only requirement we have enforced is that the data have to be available to everybody, either by a self service system (such as **anonymous ftp** on the **internet** computer network), or upon request (to be forwarded by either E-Mail or ordinary mail). This commitment to availability has been accepted by all the provider of the data bases listed in the following papers; moreover, the service of giving access to the data cannot be a commercial enterprise, although in some case the cost of the magnetic media/paper copies/electronic subscription has to be payed by the user.

The following eight papers describe, for each data base, the data sets currently available, the source of the data, the access method, the address of the contact person(s) as well as providing other useful information, such as references, availability of public domain software and/or user interfaces. Some papers also include comments on the quality and reliability of the data, and predictions on their future upgrades; however more complete information has to be looked for in the data bases themselves (e.g. in **README** and other documentation files and in online help) and/or asked to the contact person. This is necessary not only to save space, but also because the time scales for upgrade of the data bases are often comparable to the time scale of the publication of this book. The readers will also notice that we have given up the publication of the printout of the data: the size of the data bases is now much bigger than the information which can be printed in a volume such as this one; the printed versions are generally available upon request to the contact persons.