

---

# **VS Atlas Spatial Data Library**

## **Quick Start Tutorial and Helpful Tips**

---

# VS Atlas Spatial Data Library

---

## Overview

This Quick Start Guide is intended to provide steps for getting started with the VS Atlas ArcGIS Extension and includes helpful tips for best utilizing VS Atlas spatial layers. The guide assumes the user has some experience with ArcGIS (ArcCatalog & ArcMap).

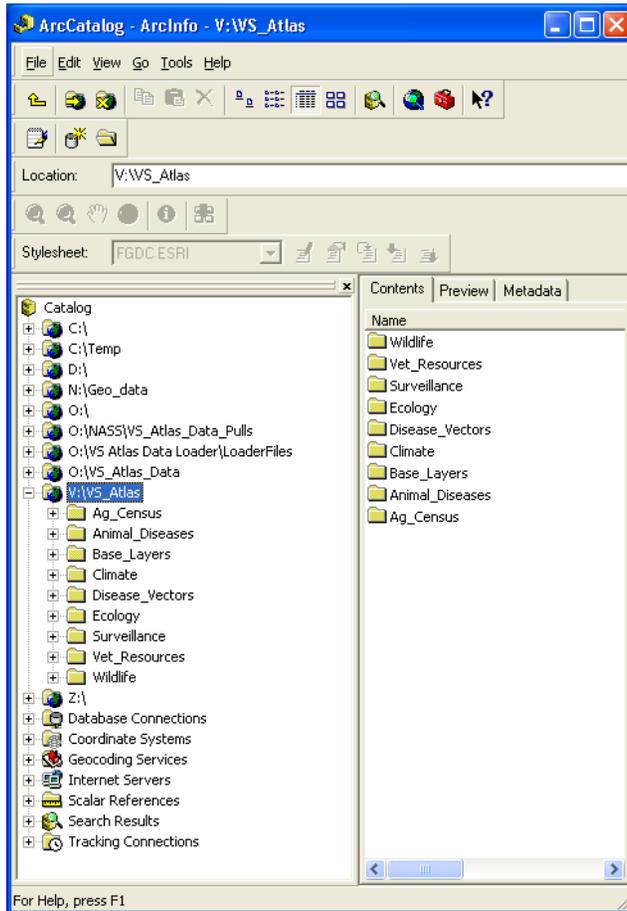
A “ArcGIS Client Application – Install Guide” document and a “Database Dictionary” are available for download from [http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/gis/vs/vs\\_atlas\\_home.htm/](http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/gis/vs/vs_atlas_home.htm/).

## Using the VS Atlas Extension

After installing the VS Atlas Extension per the Install Guide, the user can access the VS Atlas database through ArcCatalog or ArcMap using the following instructions:

-  Click the “Map Drive to VS Atlas Data” button.
  - Select the local drive you want to map the folder to (default is 'V:'). This step should only be necessary one time.
  - Click OK.
-  Click the “Quick Connect to VS Atlas” button.
  - In **ArcCatalog** the contents pane will be updated with the V:\VS\_Atlas connection containing the VS Atlas folder structure (see graphic below).

# VS Atlas Spatial Data Library

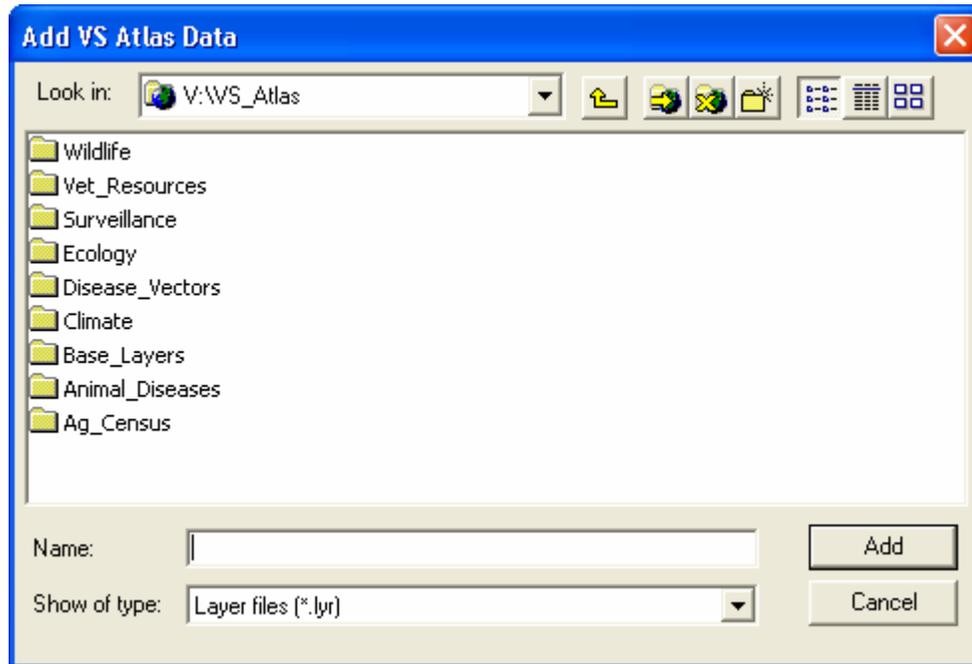


Browse to the data of interest and, if desired, click and drag into ArcMap.

**VS Atlas folder structure as V:\VS\_Atlas**

# VS Atlas Spatial Data Library

- In **ArcMap** a customize 'Add VS Atlas Data' dialog box will appear (see below)



**Add VS Atlas Data Dialog**

- Browse to the data of interest and, if desired, add to ArcMap data view.

# VS Atlas Spatial Data Library

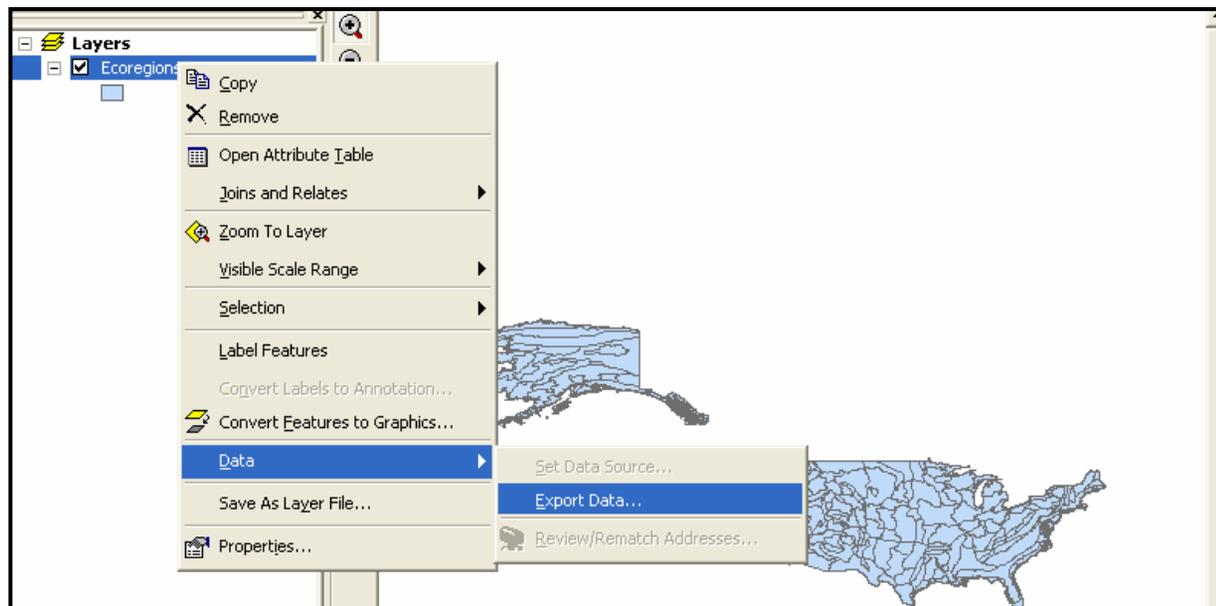
## Tips and Helpful Information

### Downloading or Saving spatial layers locally using ArcMap (RECOMMENDED)

After a VS Atlas spatial layer have been added to an ArcMap session, the data can be exported as a shapefile and saved to the user's local drive. This is recommended to improve performance. Also it is necessary if the user wants to edit a layer because the spatial layers are read-only when used from the mapped "V" drive.

To export a spatial layer:

- Right click on the layer to export, select Data -> Export Data (see below)
- Select an output location and shapefile name
- Select the desired Coordinate System
- Click OK to complete this process



Export to Shapefile

# VS Atlas Spatial Data Library

---

## Metadata and Projection Information

When the VS Atlas drive is mapped, the user will be able to view projection (.prj) and metadata (.xml) files for every spatial layer. Each metadata file includes a brief abstract, source, and contact information. These are easily viewed in ArcCatalog under the Metadata tab.

The .prj file associated with each layer contains the most current projection information for each file. This is the definitive source for projection information. At this time the SDE layer might contain slightly different projection details due to some difficulties in updating the SDE files.

## Symbology

The spatial data layers in VS Atlas do not currently have customized symbology. To save any custom changes to the colors and symbology in a layer, the user will need to export the spatial layer as a shapefile.

## Data Specific tips

### Ag Census Data

The Census of Agriculture (Ag Census) data sets are derived from the National Agricultural Statistics Service. In addition to the metadata (XML) files, look-up tables exist that contain complete field names for the abbreviated fields in each SDE layer. These tables are stored as dbf files and contain "LUT" in the filename as viewed in ArcCatalog. For some layers (Aquaculture, Misc Poultry, for example) there is one LUT that applies to many layers.

In addition, a document is available on the VS Atlas drive under the Ag\_Census directory ("VS\_Atlas\_NASS\_Codes") that contains information about the non-numeric characters used in most of the fields in the Ag Census layers. It can be viewed from within ArcCatalog.

### Wildlife

Wildlife contains too many files to list individually (over 7000). The layers are stored in a "genus\_species" format under the family folders. To learn the genus\_species name from the common name of species, an excellent resource is <http://www.itis.usda.gov>.