

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LIFE EOLETTER



WELCOME



Our EOL team has been hard at work, and now you can join our efforts by adding your own text contributions to species pages. We are thrilled to announce that EOL has officially partnered with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to begin a Chinese regional EOL. In this issue you will also find an update on the 2009 Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore BioBlitz, a profile of an EOL Fellow, and coverage of the e-Biosphere conference in London. Read on for even more news.

BioBlitz 2009 Update

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BioBlitz 2009 - Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

In our last newsletter we told you about the BioBlitz – a 24-hour event where scientists, naturalists, students, and the public come together to inventory the species in a given location. More than 5,000 people joined in the [Indiana Dunes Blitz](#), including more than 2,000 local kids and over 150 scientists.

The fun (and educational) event went ahead on May 15-16 despite heavy rains and lots of mud. Participants found more than 1,700 species, and that tally will almost certainly grow as additional specimens collected during the BioBlitz are examined back in the lab.

Interesting finds included about 20 species of rove beetles (Coleoptera: *Staphylinidae*), most new to the region. BioBlitzers also documented an invasive species of fish, the *round goby* (*Neogobius melanostomus*), which is threatening benthic (bottom-dwelling) fishes native to Lake Michigan. Scientists believe that these fish were introduced from Russia in ship [ballast water](#) in the 1980s or 1990s, and they have quickly multiplied. A few lucky participants observed *spotted turtle* (*Clemmys guttata*) hatchlings on the lakeshore; their presence indicates a breeding population within the park. Local conservationists were thrilled to hear this news, as these turtles are a threatened species native to the area.

Visit the [Indiana Dunes LifeDesk](#) for more photos and information on local species.

Look for news about BioBlitz 2010, to be held in Biscayne Bay, Florida, April 30-May 1!



Taxonomy Meets Technology

New Species Pages



How do newly discovered species find their way to Encyclopedia of Life, where they join more than a million others recognized by thousands of researchers and scientists? Here is one way.

EOL recently partnered with ZooKeys, a new peer-reviewed open-source journal that specializes in electronically publishing new species descriptions of animals. Once ZooKeys has accepted a scientific article for publication, it marks up the manuscript so that EOL species pages are automatically created when the paper is published. The mark-up process ensures that ZooKeys also submits to or links to relevant information in other databases, such as ZooBank

(a central registry of animal names), MorphBank (photographs and drawings) and GenBank (genetic sequence records). ZooKeys thus ensures rapid, automatic distribution of knowledge about these new species.

To date, EOL has received information from ZooKeys on 124 new species. EOL is also planning collaboration with other scientific journals to establish similar systems of information dissemination.

LINKING TO A WORLD OF RESOURCES

GenBank users can connect to EOL species pages through the GenBank site. 134,646 species in EOL have DNA information available through GenBank. EOL users can also click through species pages back to the genetic sequence database information on GenBank. Reciprocity is a beautiful thing.

SUCCESS STORY e-Biosphere '09

Kevin Webb



Making an Impact

In June, EOL co-hosted e-Biosphere 09 – an international conference focused on biodiversity informatics. e-Biosphere brought together a wide array of biodiversity informatics projects, with the goal of creating unprecedented global access to biodiversity information. The conference attracted more than 500 scientists, researchers, policy makers, and students.

Dr. Cristián Samper (pictured), Director of the U.S. National Museum of Natural History, gave the first keynote speech of the conference. In his talk, Samper urged the bioinformatics community to forge connections among three unique spheres: different types of information, different sources of information, and different users of information. The conference goal was to facilitate and foster these connections, ultimately promoting the understanding and protection of worldwide biodiversity.

JOINING FORCES

EOL and the Chinese Academy of Sciences



Derek Adams

Professor Liqiang Ji and Dr. Cristián Samper (front row) are joined by (back row, l-r) Dr. James Edwards, Baroness Joan Walmsley and Dr. James Hanken at the signing ceremony.

Regional EOL Coming Soon...

This June, EOL representatives signed a Memorandum of Understanding with members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), which is developing a Chinese regional EOL to serve information and literature about Chinese species.

They are also planning to host a full EOL mirror site for Asia and translate the entire EOL into Chinese - quite the massive undertaking. They have already begun significant high-quality digitizing of Chinese language biodiversity literature, and are taking steps to join the Biodiversity Heritage Library consortium.

As reported in our December, 2008 EOLetter, the Naturalis Museum in Leiden is developing a Dutch-language regional EOL, and our colleagues in at INBio in Costa Rica are undertaking a pilot study about the possibility of doing a Central American regional EOL.





SCIENTIST SERIES

Meet the scientists and experts who are working with EOL

Dr. Jadranka Rota

Dr. Jadranka Rota is studying metalmark moths (Lepidoptera: Choreutidae) – and contributing her knowledge to EOL species pages. Dr. Rota is one of the recently appointed EOL Fellows at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. When she was a sophomore at the University of Zagreb in Croatia she began volunteering at the Croatian Natural History Museum, curating their butterfly collection. Dr. Rota wrote her undergraduate Diploma Thesis on butterflies after conducting fieldwork in Paklenica National Park on some of the 84 species found there. Her time in the field was enough to convince Dr. Rota that she wanted to continue her biology studies as a career.

Dr. Rota first came across metalmark moths while doing fieldwork in Costa Rica in 2001. This group quickly became the focus of her master's thesis, PhD, and her current research on their [systematics](#) and behavior.

A typical day as an EOL Fellow often has Dr. Rota dissecting and photographing the specimens in her collection. Her work on metalmark moths integrates molecular and morphological phylogenetics, alpha taxonomy, and evolutionary studies of various character systems unique to these handsome moths.

While Dr. Rota is one of only a handful of entomologists in the world who specialize in metalmark moths, she hopes her work will allow others to enjoy the insects she loves. She believes that EOL will allow “amateurs and nature-lovers in general to identify a species from their backyard and find out about its life. As the general public becomes more familiar with the biodiversity all around us, they may attach higher value to it and be more willing to make sacrifices to protect it.”



Dr. Rota hard at work in her lab.



INSTANT GRATIFICATION

Text Contributions



The time has come - now you can contribute your species knowledge directly to EOL pages. As of late June, users can add text directly to an EOL species page, with eventual review by one of our curators. To do this, you will first need to create a free EOL account (if you don't already have one) and log in to our site. Next, you can easily start contributing text, which will be instantly available on the relevant species page on EOL, with your name as the contributor. In order to view user-contributed text from others, be sure to move the information slider on your species page to "All." Upon submission, the text will appear with a yellow background; after a curator approves it, the text will appear as verified content. Visit your favorite species page right now to start your own contributions! Look for the "Add New" icon and link at the bottom of the table of contents on the left hand side.

EOL IN A NUTSHELL

Annual Report 2008-2009

We keep you updated with our quarterly newsletters, but if you would like to know more about what we've done in 2008-2009, [see our new annual report](#).

Biodiversity Informatics Group
... serving biology

Scanning and Digitization Group
... making the published record of biodiversity open to all

Highlights

The EOL Annual Report is the official publication of the Encyclopedia of Life. It highlights the major milestones and achievements of the EOL project during the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The report is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the project's progress, challenges, and future directions. It also serves as a resource for stakeholders, partners, and the general public to learn about the impact of EOL on biodiversity science and conservation.

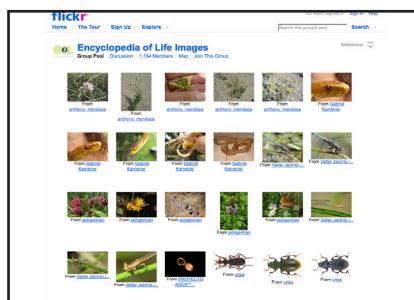


FRESH TECH New website features and content

Get Connected

The EOL Facebook and Twitter groups are up and running! Please visit our pages, follow us, and give us your feedback. How can we be better and more useful for you?

- Become a Facebook fan: [Encyclopedia of Life](#)
- Our Twitter name is [eoflife](#).



Thanks to our friends on Flickr for making the EOL group such a success. The EOL Flickr group has exceeded 1,000 members! To join and upload your photos, go to our [group page](#).



If you are lucky enough to have an iPhone, you can send photos to the Flickr group through a free iPhone app. This app allows you to photograph organisms and have the geotagged photos automatically uploaded to the EOL Flickr Group. [Check It Out](#)

GOOD NEWS

If you want to see where EOL has been covered in the news, we have an [up-to-the-minute media archive](#) with all of our articles dating back to May 2007.

DID YOU KNOW?



Florida strangler fig

Ficus aurea

This strangler fig is found throughout Florida and Central America. The tree begins life as an epiphyte (a plant that grows upon another plant), without roots in the soil. Over decades they send roots down the trunk of a host tree eventually overpowering and replacing it.



Coelacanth

Latimeria chalumnae

For a long time these fish were believed to have been extinct since the end of the Cretaceous period, but in 1938 a live specimen was caught off the east coast of South Africa. Since then, several other specimens of *L. chalumnae* have been found in waters near Comoros, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Madagascar.



Western diamondback rattle-snake

Crotalus atrox

All rattlesnakes hatch without rattles. Rattles, like those of the western diamondback, are made from a series of nested, hollow beads which are actually modified scales from the tail tip. Each time the snake sheds its skin, a new rattle segment is added. Baby diamondbacks can't rattle until they shed their skin for the first time.



Upside-down jellyfish

Cassiopea andromeda

This species lives in sandy areas and seagrass beds in coral reefs. The upside-down jellyfish is easily recognizable because it usually lies mouth upward on the bottom, in calm shallow water, gently pulsating its bell to create water flow over its arms. Sometimes crabs put these jellyfish on their backs as a form of protection as they move on the ocean floor.

Help us build the Encyclopedia of Life!

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