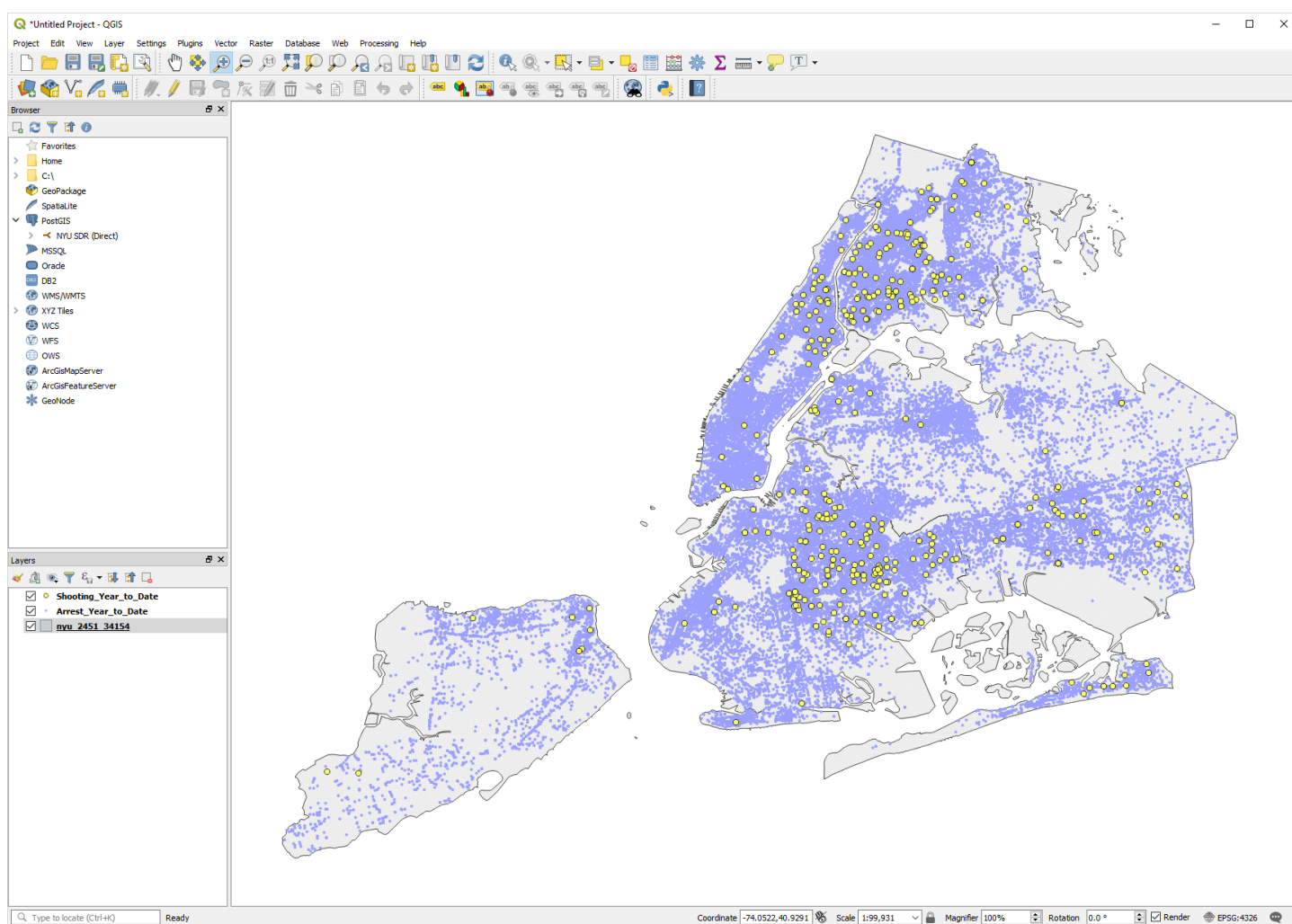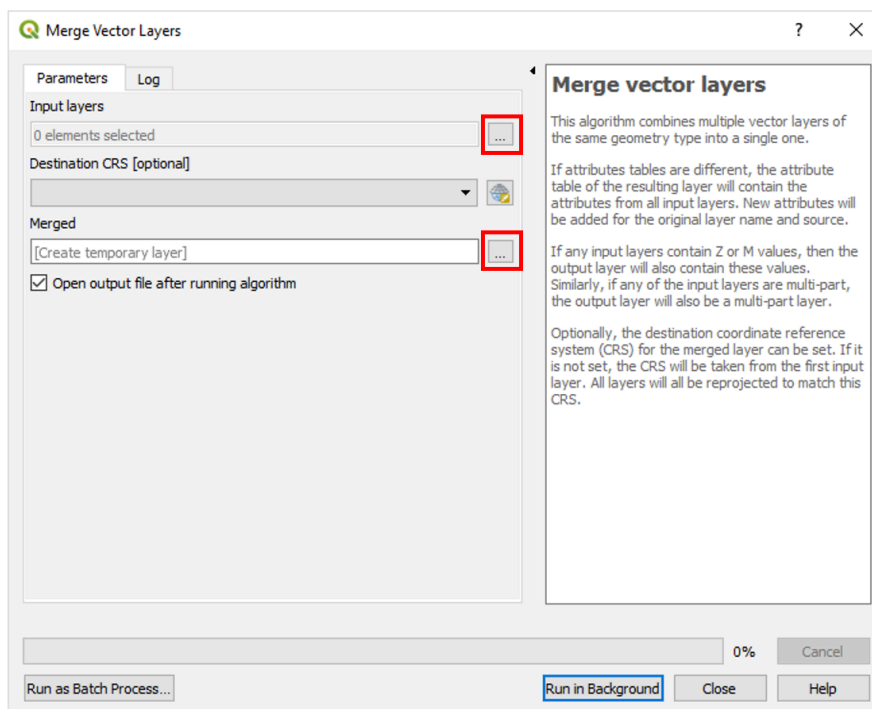# NYU DataServices

Data Management Tools:
Merging Shapefiles In QGIS

Suppose you want to combine shapefiles of the same type (points to points, polygons to polygons, lines to lines) from different sources or different time periods into a single shapefile for analysis in QGIS. For example, you would like to study two different incidents in a city. You might find arrest and shooting incident data in your study time period and you'd like to combine them to view a distribution of criminal activity in the city. This can be accomplished using the Merge geoprocessing tool. Below you see a map containing two separate shapefiles, representing a shooting incident (denoted by yellow dots) and arrest (denoted by blue dots) in New York City in 2018.
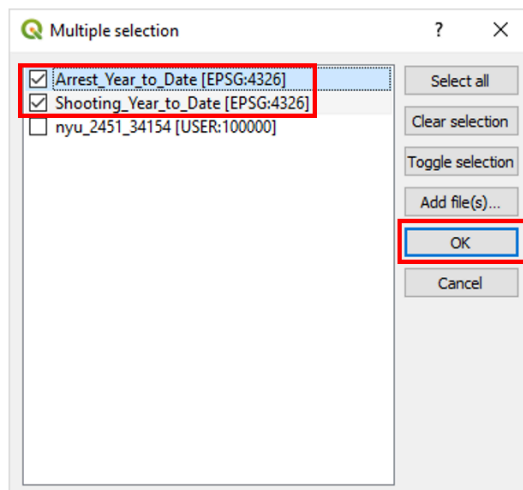
Use the Merge Tool (from the Geoprocessing menu)

1. Once the shapefiles you wish to merge are added to the Layers Panel, click on the Vector menu at the top of the QGIS interface, select Data Management Tools and then Merge Vector Layers (Vector > Data Management Tools > Merge Vector Layers).
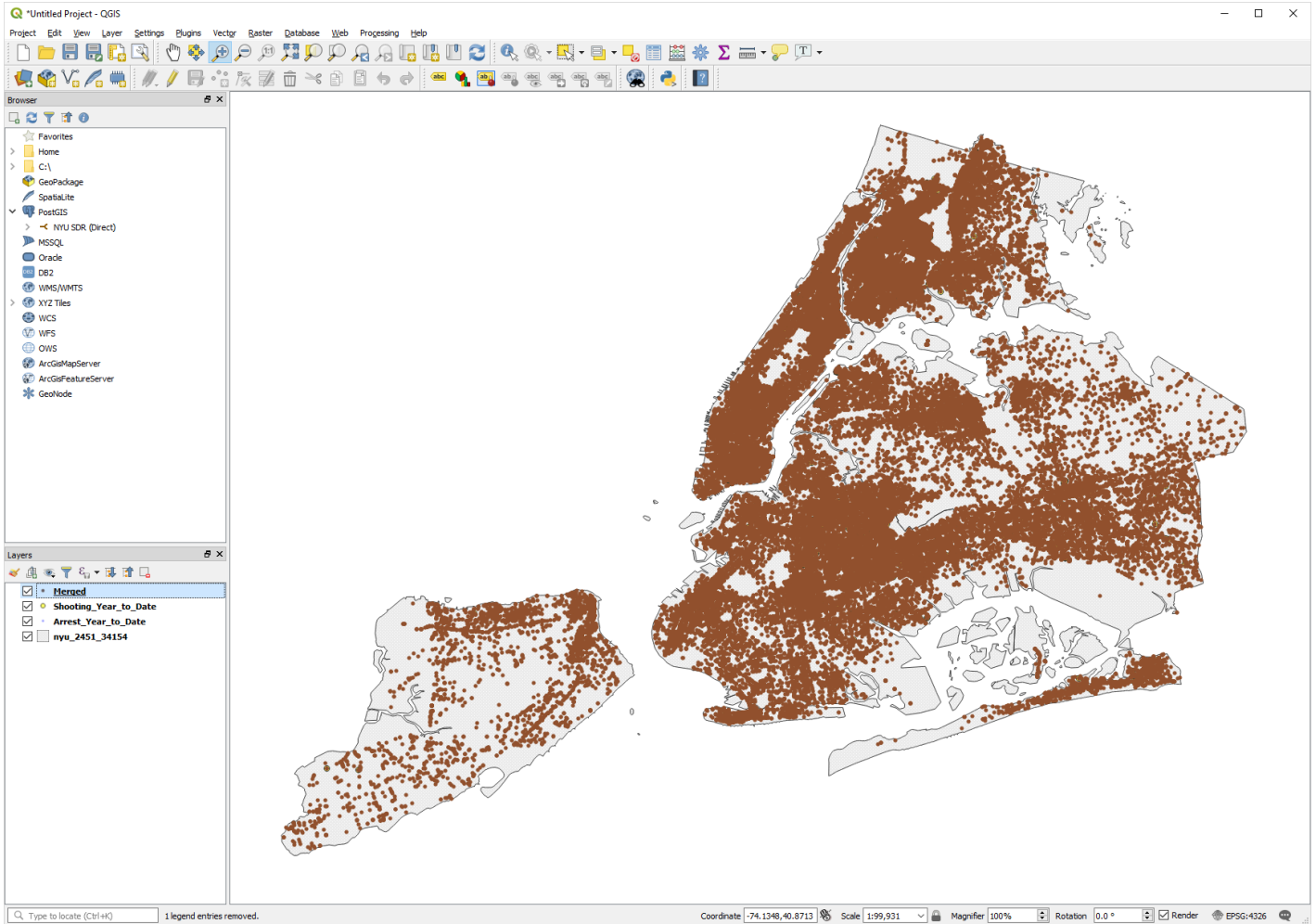

2. In the Merge Vector Layers dialogue box (shown above), use the three dots button to select the active shapefiles which you wish to merge. Alternatively, if you have not added a shapefile to QGIS you can use the Add file(s) button in the Multiple selection dialogue box (shown below) to find the shapefile you'd like to merge with your other shapefiles. Choose the output location for your newly merged shapefile by clicking three dots button in the Merged section and click OK. Lastly, click on Run in Background button.

3. QGIS will merge your shapefiles, creating a new shapefile containing all the features of the original shapefiles, like in the example below.

For more tips about merging shapefiles in QGIS, click here.