

WELCOME



Welcome back to the EOL newsletter. For the last few months, we have been using the feedback on the first version of EOL to prepare for a new major release later this year. In December, we will make EOL into a richer environment with new opportunities for participation. We are ready to accommodate our higher-than-anticipated user traffic and we look forward to sharing our progress with you here.

The Encyclopedia is a collaborative effort, and as always, we welcome your questions, comments and concerns. Please [contact us](#) and let us know what you think.

QUARTERLY QUOTE See what scientists, experts, and the public are saying about the EOL

In August, EOL teamed up with **Microsoft Photosynth** to allow users a new way to experience species pages by combining numerous digital images of an object taken from varying angles into a “synth.” Synths can be rotated, zoomed and turned to any angle to allow you to see intricate details. We are all thrilled to showcase how this ground-breaking software can make the EOL user experience even better.

element to the way we engage with our users,” said James Edwards, Executive Director of EOL.

synths of your favorite objects. Please visit www.photosynth.com for more information.

See the EOL synths [here](#).



Photosynth allows us to get an up-close look at selected specimens housed in research facilities, museums, and other scientific collections. The specimens showcased in the August **Photosynth** launch—the first of what are expected to be thousands to be displayed this way—give scientists, students, and nature enthusiasts the opportunity to study details of a harlequin beetle, a brain coral or a toucan skeleton. The specimens were photographed at the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) at Harvard University, one of EOL's cornerstone institutions.

You can upload digital pictures and use the free Photosynth software to create

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MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



Lord of the Ants

E. O. Wilson's childhood fascination with ants and their small world led him to a life of big ideas. Wilson is an Honorary Curator for Entomology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology and a Professor Emeritus at Harvard University. In his 79 years, Wilson has received more than more than 100 international medals and awards. He is the author of 25 books, two of which won Pulitzer Prizes. US-based NOVA productions released a documentary about Wilson's life in May. The 50-minute show follows Wilson from his early days in Alabama to his ground-breaking field work with ants and studies of their social behavior, and his longtime dream of creating the Encyclopedia of Life.

[See the movie here](#)

Make a Difference Donate to EOL Today!

Thanks to supporters like you, Encyclopedia of Life is working to become an unrivaled biodiversity resource for the world. Become a sponsor and help global knowledge expand. [DONATE TODAY](#)



Rave Reviews

This spring, the Avenue A | Razorfish concept video won a Pirelli *Internacional* Award. Established in 1996, the Pirelli Award is the first international multimedia competition that works to convey the breadth of science and technology communication exclusively on the Internet. All eligible works are carefully examined and finalists are chosen by an international panel including Nobel Prize winners, university students, historians and engineers. The EOL-inspired video won in the "Life Sciences" category and we are delighted to share this honor with our colleagues at Avenue A | Razorfish.

NEWSLETTER NAME CONTEST

And the winner is...

In our first issue, we asked readers to send in suggestions for our newsletter's name. We received over one hundred responses, and after much debate the EOL team settled on EOLetter. **Congratulations to all who participated!**



FRESH TECH The news you've been waiting for about our new website features and content

We are thrilled to announce that we have signed up additional data partners and have released thousands of new species pages in the past month. Until now we've had a wide array of fish pages available on EOL, but today you can visit pages for the polar bear (one of our most requested species), grizzly bear, seals, sting rays, ants, zebras and scores of other species.

Each EOL species page features content from leading biodiversity partners. Our recently completed Data Transfer Schema allows Content Partners to format existing datasets for seamless entry into the EOL and includes automatic updating tools so that you will always have access to the most current information. We are actively pursuing additional partnerships and encourage projects with pre-existing datasets to contact us at affiliations@eol.org. Together, we can expand the breadth of EOL.

In addition to developing tools and services for Content Partners, the Biodiversity Informatics Group is also working on innovative new features for the website which will be

released in about six months. We'll keep you in the loop on status and progress.

In other news, please join us in welcoming Dr. Cynthia Parr as the newest member of EOL. Parr works as Director of the Species Pages Group and has the big job of liaising with our numerous content partners. She has a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Michigan. She spends too much time behind a computer and not enough time climbing trees these days.



Cynthia enjoying the great outdoors

CONTENT PARTNERS Get a closer look at the collaborations that help share biodiversity information with the world

At Encyclopedia of Life, we work to make the site a preeminent place for biodiversity information on the Internet. But we cannot do it alone.

Our data are provided by our content partners and comes from a long list of prestigious online scientific databases and image archives. We are proud to serve this information through our portal. Currently, we work with over twenty groups from around the world including those listed to the right.

We are always adding content and constantly forming new partnerships with biodiversity groups.

[AmphibiaWeb](#)
[Animal Diversity Web](#)
[AntWeb](#)
[ARKive](#)
[Biodiversity Heritage Library \(BHL\)](#)
[BioLib.cz](#)
[BioLib.de](#)
[BioPix](#)
[Catalogue of Life](#)
[eFloras](#)
[FishBase](#)
[Global Biodiversity Information Facility \(GBIF\)](#)
[International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)
[micro*scope](#)
[Solanaceae Source](#)
[Tree of Life](#)
[uBio](#)

SCIENTIST SERIES Meet the scientist and experts who are working with EOL

Botanist Sandy Knapp can tell you everything there is to know about the commonly named deadly nightshade plant, or belladonna. Belladonna is one of the most toxic plants found in the Western Hemisphere. The consumption of just a few of the sweet-tasting but poisonous berries can be lethal.

Dr. Knapp knows all this because she is an expert in the taxonomy and phylogeny of the nightshade family based at the Natural History Museum in London, UK.

As part of her work at the Museum, Dr. Knapp is one of the leaders of the Planetary Biodiversity Inventory: *Solanum* project. This five-year endeavor, which started in 2004, is funded by the US National Science Foundation and aims to produce a worldwide database of the species of plant genus *Solanum*. The Solanaceae family includes plants such as tomatoes and potatoes, tobacco, and petunias. The database serves its information through EOL species pages and through its own website: [Solanaceae Source](#).



Botanist Sandy Knapp



Solanum Herculeum



Solanum Whalenii

An internationally respected botanist, Knapp has been studying plants since she was an undergraduate at Pomona College in Claremont, California, USA. She initially intended to study literature or history, but a botany class changed her mind. She has now worked in botany for over 25 years. Today, when asked what her dream job would have been if she weren't a scientist, she answered "A different scientist — I can't think of anything more exciting or interesting to be."

DID YOU KNOW?



Vampire bats share blood meals with each other. It helps them survive when the chances of any one bat getting blood are low. [more...](#)



Kangaroos and wallabies have no reverse gear. They can't move backwards. [more...](#)



Black imported fire ants have a very high pitched squeal, barely audible to the human ear, that is used as a distress call. [more...](#)



Ginkgo biloba is known as a 'living fossil', because it is the sole survivor of an ancient group of trees that date back to beyond the time of the dinosaurs. [more...](#)

Orndley Zicha, courtesy of BiolLib.az

Get the Inside Scoop

We have just published our first **annual report**. Visit the website to see a copy.

[Click Here](#)