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The new EOL.org can be previewed by media from Wednesday, Aug. 31, at <http://preview.eol.org> (password: whaleshark). Based at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, EOL officials are available for advance interviews.

Redesigned and Vastly Expanded, Encyclopedia of Life Version 2 Offers Information on 1/3rd of Known Species; is Easier to Use, Personalize

*Landmark global online collaboration now offers trusted information on 700,000+ species,
35 million+ pages of scanned literature, 600,000+ photos and videos*

The second edition of the free, online collaborative Encyclopedia of Life debuts today with a redesign and new features making it easier to use, to personalize, and to interact with fellow enthusiasts worldwide. It is also vastly expanded, offering information on more than one-third of all known species on Earth.

The new interface makes it easy for users to find organisms of interest; to create personal collections of photos and information; to find or upload pictures, videos and sounds; and to share comments, questions and expertise with users worldwide who share similar interests.

EOLv2 offers more than 20 times as many pages with content than the EOL.org launched 30 months ago -- up from the original 30,000 pages in February 2008 to 700,000 today. The global partnership of 176 content providers behind EOL.org is progressing towards an aspiration of 1.9 million pages -- one for every species known to science.

It also now contains more than 600,000 still images and videos -- 20 times the number available in August 2009. EOL photos are also showcased online at www.flickr.com/groups/encyclopedia_of_life.

Other available resources include roughly 35 million pages of scanned literature created by the [Biodiversity Heritage Library](#) (BHL). Recently added books in the BHL include 330 volumes from Charles Darwin's library with his extensive personal annotations.

In addition to the 700,000 species pages with information, [EOL.org](#) has over 1 million more pages in place awaiting content from partners and members.

The Encyclopedia of Life is compiled from existing databases and from contributions by experts and non-experts throughout the world. It aims to build one "infinitely expandable" page for each species, including video, sound, images, graphics, as well as text.

The new version of [EOL.org](#) responds to requests from the general public, citizen scientists, educators and professional biologists around the world for a more engaging, accessible and personal site.

Launched in its new format as the new school year begins, [EOL.org](#) has proven a particularly popular classroom tool.

In addition, by making it easy for scientists to compare and contrast information about life on Earth, the resulting compendium has the potential to provide new insights into the mysteries of living nature.

[EOL.org](#) seeks to become a microscope in reverse, or "macroscope," helping users discern large-scale patterns. By aggregating for analysis information on Earth's estimated 1.9 million known species, scientists say EOL could, for example, help map vectors of human disease, reveal mysteries behind longevity, suggest substitute plant pollinators for a swelling list of places where honeybees no longer provide that service, and foster strategies to slow the spread of invasive species.

A global community of over 700 curators reviews, and finding information trustworthy, approves it to be displayed in the portal. Staff at contributing institutions in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas support them.

Fully internationalized, the new [EOL.org](#) provides for English, Arabic, and Spanish language speakers.

[EOL.org](#) is available both as a website and via third party mobile and desktop applications.

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Quotable quotes:

“EOL.org Version 2 will effect an extraordinary expansion of the Encyclopedia of Life, opening its vast and growing storehouse of knowledge to a much larger range of users, including medicine, biotechnology, ecology, and now increasingly the general public.”

Harvard University biologist **Edward O. Wilson**, one of the driving forces behind the formation of the EOL

“The new EOL.org virtual collections feature is groundbreaking. It gives our audiences a new way to learn by collaborative construction of knowledge. With this new capability, EOL brings together citizens, students, educators, conservationists and researchers from around the world in real time to explore the dynamic complexities of the biodiversity they care about. This collaboration brings a human focus to science and harnesses the creative potential of EOL’s users.”

Erick Mata, EOL Executive Director

“EOL.org now empowers users to gather and share information from its vast holdings directly on the EOL site as their own virtual “collections.” Their virtual collections put life into meaningful contexts from scholarly ones such as "Invasive Insects of North America" or "Endangered Birds of Ecuador" to personal collections such as "A Checklist of Trees in My Backyard." Only the imagination and energy of the global EOL community and users of EOLv2 limit the possibilities.”

Jesse Ausubel, Vice-President, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and EOL Executive Committee Member

“Just like Tom Sawyer needed help painting his fence, this new version of EOL.org invites people around the world to participate in the process of gathering knowledge of living nature. EOL has to be full of people to succeed.”

Bob Corrigan, EOL Director, Product Management

“EOL is the ultimate online field guide for citizen scientists and I’m sure people will love building and sharing collections in this new version. There are many online sites dedicated to specific groups of species such as insects, birds or mammals. Not since Noah, however, has there been an effort like this to bring all the world’s species together.”

Jennifer Preece, Professor and Dean, College of Information Studies. University of Maryland

“The new site is a delight to use. My students will love the look and feel. The EOL virtual collections, in particular, will be an invaluable resource in the classroom as we explore the connections among and between species and ecosystems. EOL.org is the first place I send my

students, and encourage them to revisit as often as possible. There is truly nothing like it.”

Jeff Danielian, middle school teacher of natural science, Providence, Rhode Island USA

Background:

Founded in 2007, EOL.org increases awareness and understanding of living nature by gathering, generating and sharing knowledge in an open, freely accessible and trusted digital resource. Since its public launch, EOL has burgeoned to provide trusted information on 700,000 species from 176 content providers.

EOL.org is a valuable tool for both scientists and anyone interested in the living world, and is being developed by a unique collaboration between experts and the general public.

Some 1.9 million species are known to science today -- with 1.2 million discovered, described and catalogued and an estimated 700,000 discovered and described but not yet catalogued. A related project, the Census of Marine Life, in August published a newly-revised estimate of 8.7 million species on Earth, the vast majority yet to be discovered.

Harvard's Dr. Edward O. Wilson articulated the need for a dynamic modern portrait of biodiversity in a widely read [essay](#) in 2003. Major start-up funding for the initiative came from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 2007, soon complemented by a further grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

EOL member institutions and donations from around the world provide additional support.

The Encyclopedia of Life operates as an ongoing collaboration of individuals and organizations who share the vision to provide global access to knowledge about life on Earth. Member institutions include the Atlas of Living Australia, the Biodiversity Heritage Library, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, la Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO), the Field Museum of Natural History, Harvard University, Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad de Costa Rica (INBio), the Marine Biological Laboratory, the Missouri Botanical Garden, NCB Naturalis - the Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity, the New Library of Alexandria, the Smithsonian Institution and the South African National Biodiversity Institution (SANBI). Please visit www.eol.org for more information.