

WELCOME



We are pleased to bring you the first issue of the Encyclopedia of Life's quarterly newsletter. We hope its easy-to-navigate, online format will keep you updated on the progress and news of the Encyclopedia. We encourage your feedback on ways to make this newsletter better, and we are glad you have decided to join us.

Would you like to get more involved? As we grow, we seek your help in finding the perfect name for this newsletter. Please see the article at the end of this issue, "Think! Compete! Win!" for more information on the newsletter naming contest. We look forward to hearing from you.

IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ Quarterly Quote
- ▶ Milestones
- ▶ Famed Biologist E.O. Wilson Wins TED Prize
- ▶ EOL Website: Better Than Ever
- ▶ Media Spotlight: In the News Around the World
- ▶ Special Feature: Think! Compete! Win!
- ▶ Scientist Series

QUARTERLY QUOTE

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

One of the greatest assets of the EOL will be its ability to help in the conservation of our rapidly dwindling biodiversity. According to Graham Higley, head of Library and Information Services at the Natural History Museum in London, ***"On a planet of shrinking resources, this information will help people make wiser decisions about preserving our natural world."***

The current extinction rate of plant and animal species is around 1,000 times faster than it was in pre-human times — and this will increase to 10,000 times faster by the year 2050. (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Biodiversity Synthesis. World Resources Institute, Washington, DC.) With animals and plants disappearing more quickly than scientists can

discover and study them, the EOL will serve as a vital conservation tool. Currently, there are approximately 1.8 million known and named species in the world, and scientists say there might be up to 100 million that have not been discovered. The more we know about species the harder we can work to save them.



MILESTONES

Each quarter we'll update you on our progress. For this first issue we have outlined some goals. Over the next five years the EOL aims to:

- Create 1 million species pages with each page verified by a scientific expert(s).
- Digitize a large portion of the world's core biodiversity literature.
- Generate educational materials for students, schools and citizen scientists.
- Use the EOL as a resource to generate new knowledge about the world's biodiversity.

Funding to help start the Encyclopedia of Life has been generously provided by the John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation and the Sloan Foundation.



FAMED BIOLOGIST E.O. WILSON WINS TED PRIZE

Harvard biologist and two-time Pulitzer-prize winner is awarded \$100,000 to help fund his wish: the EOL.

TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design, and it started in 1984 as a conference to bring together individuals from each of these three industries. Since then, TED has expanded to a global community that includes international conferences, talks and hundreds of thousands of dollars in prizes. The goal of TED is to spread ideas, and each year at the TED conference in Monterey, CA, more than a thousand people gather to hear speakers give talks on science, business, the arts and the global issues facing our world.

The **TED Prize** is designed to leverage the TED Community's exceptional array of talent and resources. It is awarded annually to three exceptional individuals who each receive \$100,000 and, more importantly, the granting of "One Wish to Change the World." These wishes have led to collaborative global initiatives with far-reaching impact.

In March 2007, Edward O. Wilson, a Harvard biologist and professor emeritus, was awarded one of the three TED Prizes. In his talk, Wilson described his "wish" for an Encyclopedia of Life as a way to learn about and preserve the earth's biodiversity before it disappears. See Wilson's TED talk [here](#).



Jon Chase/Harvard

[See Wilson's TED talk](#)

At the 2008 TED Conference, the EOL will be highlighted during a TED Prize update session. Attendees will see how far the project has come in the past twelve months and offer ideas and solutions to make it even better.



EOL WEBSITE: BETTER THAN EVER



[Click to visit website](#)

Have you seen our website? Take another look at new features we have added.

The EOL website (www.eol.org) has had close to one million hits since May of last year. On the site, users can get a better idea of the EOL by reading the “Frequently Asked Questions” page. Visitors can check out our first species pages and provide feedback via an [online questionnaire](#). You can also watch videos, read and participate in blogs, and see the research institutions and museums participating in this global effort. In addition, users can link to articles that have been published about the EOL and see bios of committee members.

The EOL website recently added a forum feature where people can post their comments and engage in discussions. Since its creation in September, 2007, the forum has attracted hundreds of registered users. Become the newest member by visiting forum.eol.org.

Interested in working for the EOL? Our website also includes an “Employment Opportunities” tab. A number of component groups are looking to hire and job opportunities continue to be updated [here](#).

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Since the birth of the Encyclopedia of Life in May of last year, the EOL has been documented in more than 500 publications, in more than 30 languages, and in more than 15 countries world wide.

To give users a sense of what they could expect from the site, the interactive marketing and media firm, Avenue A | Razorfish, donated its time and expertise to help us produce an introductory video about the project. The outcome of this collaboration is a dynamic, award-winning example of the power of the EOL and how it can change the way we see the world around us. The video has received rave reviews. It is also posted on YouTube, where it has been viewed over 180,000 times.

[Click to See Video](#)



THINKCOMPETEWIN

**Compete in the contest to name this newsletter.
We will recognize the winner in the next newsletter and use their title for forthcoming issues.**

We are looking for just the right name for this newsletter; something that reflects our global, interactive and forward-thinking goals. Do you have any great ideas? If so, please email newsletter name suggestions to secretariat@eol.org with "Newsletter Name Contest" in the subject line. We will debut the new title in next quarter's online publication. This is your chance to be a part of EOL history!

[E-Mail Us Your Ideas!](#)

SCIENTIST SERIES [Meet the scientists and experts who are working with the EOL:](#)

Entomologist Terry Erwin has discovered thousands of new species of insects during his research trips in the Amazon rainforest and will use his knowledge to help craft and verify insect species pages.

Dr. Terry L. Erwin, Chairman of the Department of Entomology and a Research Entomologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, is known for his expertise with neotropical beetles and biodiversity, especially those groups that never touch the ground. His special family of beetles, the Carabidae, has proven particularly tricky to locate and study because most species live in trees in the canopy layer of rainforests high above the forest floor. Erwin takes this all in stride though. Despite long, hot days of research in the tropics, Erwin's sense of humor shines through when it comes to these insects. He has come up with some funny names for new beetle species he discovered, including *Agravaion*, *Agra cadabra*, *Agra dax* (his license plate), and *Agra katewinslettae*. Erwin's database for the Western Hemisphere Carabidae documents nearly 10,000 species and is designed to feed pages to the EOL for each of these species.

Dr. Erwin will be working with the Species Sites group to help create and edit many of the EOL insect pages. He is also Chair of the EOL-National Museum of Natural History Liaison Committee.



Terry Erwin using a fogging technique to study beetles in the canopy of a Peruvian rainforest.

Mark W. Moffett, all rights reserved

DID YOU KNOW?

Currently, the oldest text available through the Biodiversity Heritage Library is an early work on the medicinal uses of plants from the collections of the Missouri Botanical Garden Library. It was published in 1484.

The EOL website has had over 800,000 visits since its launch in May of 2007. Users logged on from 210 countries and territories around the world.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

www.eol.org