



Library of Images From the Environment (LIFE)

High-quality biological media resources for scientists, conservationists, decision-makers, educators, students, and the general public worldwide

The NBII LIFE

The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) Library of Images From the Environment (LIFE) <http://life.nbii.gov> provides online photographs, videos, and audio recordings related to nature and the environment from the NBII's own collections and from contributing partners around the world. The library contains well-documented resources associated with organisms, habitats, environmental issues, wildlife management, and biological research. As new media resources are added, the library continues to evolve the depth and diversity of its subjects. We invite you to explore and utilize our expanding online resource.

The Value of the NBII LIFE

The mission of the LIFE is to provide a wide range of high-quality biological media resources to scientists, conservationists, decision-makers, educators, students, and the general public worldwide. As such, one of our top priorities is to serve resources that are either public domain or available for most nonprofit purposes.

The NBII LIFE also requires that each media resource be dynamically linked

to validated metadata, i.e., specific information describing the resource, including scientific and common names, geographical location, and photographer and contributing partner names. Additional well-documented details describing the contents, like behavior, life stage, and habitat are key to understanding our natural environment, and to increasing the usefulness of the resource.

With this information, images, video, and audio-recordings related to nature and the environment can be used to:

- Aid species identification, as well as illustrate behaviors,
- Assist in determining species distributions,
- Provide a baseline for changing conditions,
- Complement faded museum specimens by better illustrating their colors, shape, or size,
- Illustrate lessons, scientific papers, news articles, Web sites, presentations, proposals, brochures, reports, and posters, and
- Facilitate decisions about our environment and its resources.



Alaskan landscape



Assateague Island ponies

Benefits to Contributing Partners

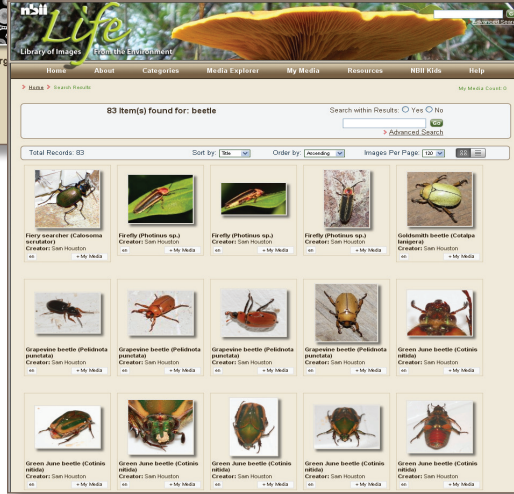
The library's holdings encompass a broad range of species, habitats, ecological issues, and scientific methods. Because of the information attached to each media resource, visitors to the LIFE Web site can readily locate contributed images, audio, and video. The contributor's name and Web site, and the photographer's name, are linked to the media resource, thus providing exposure to the widest possible audience. Some other benefits to contributors include:

- An online repository for contributors to easily locate, transfer, organize, share, and archive their media resources,
- Secure, long-term digital preservation,
- Robust and diverse search tools,
- Strict and scientifically ethical quality control,
- Maintenance of legal rights,
- Tools to relate the media resources with other resources, such as other images, databases, and publications,
- Capacity building,
- Training in cataloging concepts and tools,
- The application of global media standards, and



1 Home Page: Browse the library by broad biological categories, by special collections, or by going straight to a featured image. Other tools, such as the search box, the Media Explorer browser, and a cart to hold your images are also available from the home page.

2 Thumbnails Page: Browse all the thumbnails within a category.



3 Details Page: View an image's metadata record and links to other resolutions.

- Technical support with resource transfer and metadata.

How the NBII LIFE Works

Image and other media seekers may browse through our broad categories or search for specific resources contained in the library (see graphics above). A search or clicking on a subject category yields thumbnail views of all resources. Clicking on an individual thumbnail then displays a larger view of that image or a playable sample of audio and video, as well as the resource's metadata record, and links to additional sizes and resources.

Resources and Metadata Standards

The NBII LIFE accepts only resources that meet certain guidelines regarding resolutions, rights, credible identification, and detailed metadata. These guidelines are based on current global standards and technologies.

Images and other media resources should be recorded at the highest resolution possible. High resolution resources and proper, minimal file compression are essential to provide worthwhile scientific information,

compatibility, interoperability, and long-term preservation.

The NBII LIFE staff provides guidance on the best methods to record resource-related metadata, such as scientific name, dates, and more. Adhering to the NBII metadata schema ensures that the metadata and images are easily accessible to the widest variety of users, especially scientists, natural resource managers, and decision-makers.

The NBII LIFE is further developing an online tool to easily allow for the recording of metadata and uploading of media resources, with capabilities such as automatic referencing for the most recent scientific name for an organism. Once this tool completed, LIFE staff will provide the necessary training to any contributors.

About the NBII

The NBII <http://www.nbii.gov> provides online access to biological data and information on our nation's plants, animals, and ecosystems. Data and information maintained by federal, state, and local government agencies; non-government organizations; and

private-sector organizations are linked through the NBII gateway and made accessible to a variety of audiences including researchers, natural resource managers, decision-makers, educators, students, and other private citizens.

For More Information

For more information about the NBII LIFE or to explore image project opportunities, contact the LIFE coordinators:

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