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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 2020



The [Biodiversity Heritage Library \(BHL\)](#) improves research methodology by collaboratively making biodiversity literature openly available to the world as part of a global biodiversity community.

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Save the Date! Giving Tuesday 2020

We've been honored to hear from so many of you about the vital impact BHL has had on your research, particularly this year.



Dr Erica McAlister
@flygirlNHM

...

Dear @BioDivLibrary - just thank you. I am data basing from my couch and I have no access to my books. But YOU have many of the important taxonomic tomes scanned and I can resolve many a nomenclatural problem - #bighugs

6:06 AM · Aug 14, 2020 · Twitter Web App

For Giving Tuesday on 1 December, we'll be sharing some of the ways we're working with our partners to ensure that BHL continues to empower your research, no matter where you are. It is thanks to the generosity and support of our community that we have been able to meet the needs of our users in a rapidly-changing environment throughout 2020. Please save the date for Giving Tuesday and consider [making a gift in support of BHL](#) so that, together, we can continue this important work.



BHL at TDWG 2020

This year, as organizations around the world have done in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) held its annual conference virtually. As part of the conference, BHL hosted a symposium on 20 October 2020 entitled “[Enhancing Connections With the Global Neighbourhood Through Expanding Partnerships](#)”.

Speakers discussed building BHL's technical strategy, DOIs, taxonomic name finding services, and BHL's response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

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“When I’m conducting a status review for a rare plant, I often find it useful to check the original species description. I use BHL primarily to find historic documents with these descriptions.”



Dr. Robert E. Preston
Senior Biologist with ICF International

Meadowfoam and Cluster-Lilies: Empowering Research on Rare Plants

Taxonomy is essential to the conservation process. Historic literature is essential for taxonomic research. Botanist Dr. Robert Preston shares how BHL's open access collections help empower his conservation work on rare plants.

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"Acknowledging and understanding colonial biases in knowledges of biodiversity are fundamental steps towards equitable, sustainable, and fair bio-diverse coexistence. By analysing the epistemologies of Latin American biodiversities in the BHL, I seek to contribute to such decolonisation, especially regarding the further (hopefully decolonial) development of this valuable digital library."



LIDIA PONCE DE LA VEGA

PH.D. CANDIDATE IN HISPANIC STUDIES AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Towards Online Decoloniality

In her research, Lidia Ponce de la Vega (Ph.D. Candidate in Hispanic Studies at McGill University) explores digital archives, archival practices and decolonisation of online epistemologies. As part of her dissertation, she performed a critical study of the BHL México program to understand how users in Latin America engage with BHL's collections as well as how the program can help decolonise biodiversity knowledge and help inform best practices for decolonising digital archives more broadly.

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Empowering Research on Marine Bioinvasions

Especies Exóticas Marino-Costeras de Argentina (2018) is the first book on exotic marine coastal species of Argentina. Co-author and editor Dr. Evangelina Schwindt shares how BHL helped



"My work requires historical literature and records from scientific expeditions in different languages. BHL is the best place to find the bibliography I need to reconstruct the past and present of marine species."



Dr. Evangelina Schwindt
*Head of the Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes
Costeros from CONICET in Argentina*

inform research for this book and her broader work on invasive marine species, which helps support conservation of native species and ecosystems.

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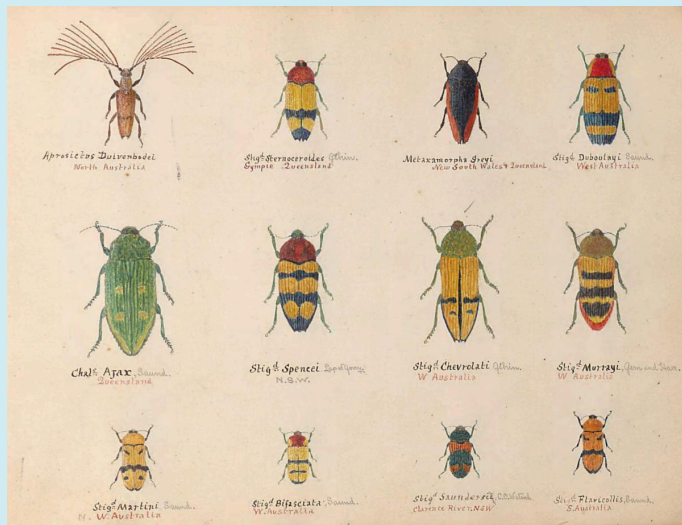
BHL and Earth Optimism 2020

Conservation history is filled with the stories of individuals whose work helped shape the modern environmental movement, such as [Alexander von Humboldt](#) (1769-1859), who gave early warnings about humanity's ability to induce climate change and destroy ecosystems, or [Richard Evans Schultes](#) (1915-2001), who emphasized the importance of respecting and incorporating Indigenous knowledge in conservation activities. This same history also teaches us that individual action can inspire significant and positive change, as seen through the stories of [species brought back from the brink](#) and wide-scale attitudinal shifts around societal norms like the use of [feathers in fashion](#).

As part of our participation in the global [Earth Optimism](#) movement commemorating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day this year, we're

collaborating with our partners to share conservation success stories...past and present. Explore our [Earth Optimism series](#) to learn more about important contributors to and milestones in conservation history and find out how BHL is empowering conservation work today.

[Learn More >>](#)



Boulay's Hand-Painted Beetles

In 1880, Francis du Boulay began work on a set of hand-painted Coleoptera volumes documenting hundreds of specimens collected across Australia. These volumes, recently digitized by Museums Victoria, are not only aesthetically interesting, but they also offer valuable scientific information for contemporary scientists.

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THANK YOU TO

SUSAN FRASER

*Recently-retired Thomas J. Hubbard Vice President and
Director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library at the
New York Botanical Garden*

Celebrating the Career of Susan Fraser

On 14 August 2020, Susan Fraser retired as the Thomas J. Hubbard Vice President and Director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library at The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG). Susan played a vital role in the founding and development of BHL. While we send our heartfelt gratitude and best wishes in retirement, we are glad that retirement does not mean “goodbye”, as Susan will continue her association with NYBG under emeritus status. Please join us in thanking Susan for her dedication and impact on librarianship and BHL.

[Learn More >>](#)

The Case of the Florida Nutmeg

Fewer than 1,000 individual trees of the critically endangered Florida nutmeg (*Torreya taxifolia*) persist in their native habitat in the southeastern U.S. Open access publications and correspondence in BHL helped botanist Dr. Brian M. Boom conduct historical

BHL



"Conservation-related research benefits greatly from BHL in terms of providing access to some of the classic and most iconic images of plant species and to the early texts and archival materials, especially correspondence, pertaining to the focal species."



Dr. Brian Boom

*Curator Emeritus and former Vice President
for Conservation Strategy and Bassett Maguire
Curator of Botany at The New York Botanical Garden*

conservation and systematics research on the species.

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