



# The Biodiversity Heritage Library

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Q3, FY11 April-June 2011

A Report on the Smithsonian Libraries'  
Activities in the BHL



Smithsonian Institution Libraries

# Introduction

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This quarter has seen some important developments in the world of BHL, from continued preparations for the Life and Literature Conference in Chicago, IL, Nov. 14-15, 2011, to the latest BHL-Europe meeting that took place June 7-10 in Tervuren & Meise, Belgium. Furthermore, the official release of the Charles Darwin's Library project served as an exciting climax to Q3, FY2011.

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This quarter, BHL staff were busy organizing and promoting the Life and Literature Conference (Chicago, IL, USA, Nov. 14-15, 2011), which seeks to “convene librarians, biologists, computer scientists, publishers, students, and other stakeholders to set the agenda for biodiversity literature digitizing and its networked environment for the next four to five years.” Conference Attendees may participate in four thematic tracks covering issues involving: the most useful digitization and delivery methods for scientific

research; current and future publishing models; educational applications for and needs from digitized biodiversity literature; and the creation of new collaborative networks built around tools, data, and user communities.

Earlier, George Dyson, a historian of technology, was named the first plenary speaker for the event; Richard Pyle, an expert in taxonomy and biogeography of coral-reef fishes and a commissioner of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, will join him as the second plenary speaker. Registration is now in full

swing, and the BHL team has high hopes that the conference will play a key role in directing the future endeavors of BHL and other biodiversity digitization efforts.

On June 7-10, 2011, members of the BHL-E staff from all over Europe convened in Meise and Tervuren, Belgium for the BHL-E Annual Review Meeting. Topics included collection development; evaluation and testing; target users; content analysis; best practices guidelines; BHL-E's web-database content management system, the GRIB; metadata interoperability; portal architecture; and dissemina-

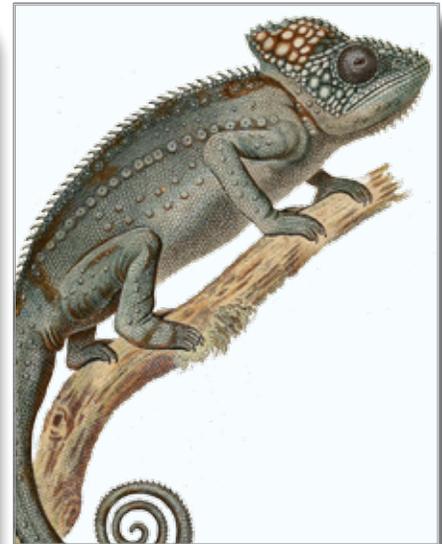


tion activities. SIL staff members Bianca Crowley and Martin Kalfatovic attended the meetings. Participants reported that the meeting was highly successful and demonstrated that BHL-E is making steady progress.

Finally, this quarter saw the official release of the Charles Darwin's Library project, a collaborative effort involving BHL, Cambridge University, the Darwin Manuscripts Project (AMNH), and the Natural History Museum (London). The Library, which will eventually hold digitized copies of all 1,480 books in Darwin's personal library, launched with 330 of his most heavily annotated works. Remarkably, all of Darwin's annotations are completely transcribed and display to the right of each annotated page in BHL. Furthermore, the transcriptions are fully indexed, allowing users to search for any comments Darwin made in his books regarding a specific subject. SIL staff heavily promoted the Library's release via BHL's social media platforms and saw a significant amount of user interest and excitement in the project via these avenues.

However, while these events may represent the highlights of BHL for Quarter 3 of 2011, they by no means tell the whole story. Learn more about the progress BHL has made, and SIL's specific contributions to the project, in the subsequent pages of this report. ■

Left Page:  
 Left: *The Cabinet of Oriental Entomology* (1848), pl. 22  
 Middle: *Nouvelles Archives du Muséum d'histoire Naturelle*, v. 1 (1865), pl. 4  
 Right: *Nouvelles Archives du Muséum d'histoire Naturelle*, v. 1 (1865), pl. 1  
 Right Page:  
 Top: *Erpétologie générale, ou, Histoire Naturelle Complète des Reptiles*, Atlas (1854), pl. 27  
 Middle: *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, Mammalia (1879-82), pl. 22  
 Bottom: *The Conchological Illustrations*, v. 1 (1841), pl. 180



“I am a first time user ... and I am awed and appreciative!”

- Harry G. Lee

“I have just found your website - an excellent facility and very welcome. Please keep up the good work it is much appreciated.”

- Rowland Hartle

“Thank you much for your help. It is so useful as I am right now working on the fishes of Ganges. Moreover it is so great that the library provides classic literature on fishes and it was a dream to me [when] I started my taxonomy ten years back. It is marvellous [what] you did for us which are badly in need of old literature.

Thanks a lot.”

- Dr. M. Arunachalam



# Quarterly Statistics

Left: *Figures des Champignons, Servant de Supplément aux Planches de Bulliard*, (1839-42) pl. 683  
 Middle Left: *Bilder-atlas zur Wissenschaftlich-populären Naturgeschichte der Vögel in ihren sämtlichen Hauptformen* (1864), fig. 97-101  
 Middle Right: *Natural History of the Animal Kingdom for the Use of Young People* (1889), pl. 7  
 Right: *Exotic Conchology* (1821), pl. Pterocera aurantia

The efforts of the Biodiversity Heritage Library are helping researchers around the world in their efforts to save endangered species. As one of our users, Javier Biaggi, said after receiving notification that the volume he had requested had been scanned,

“Hurray! Thanks , Thanks, Thanks! Thank you very, very, much. You make me very happy when you said that you have the volume and now more than very happy. To at last read the document. This is the birth certificate of the *Atlantea tulita*, *Synchloe tulita* as Herr Dewitz baptized her. This is an endangered Butterfly that I have been very busy to save for the last 4 years.”

With such gratitude as this, how can we not love our jobs?

## Biodiversity Heritage Library Q3 Portal Additions:

Items Added: 6,002  
 Pages Added: 2,119,251  
 Names Added: 5,816,907

## Smithsonian Libraries’ Q3 Items Statistics\*:

Non-Rare Items  
 Scanned: 631  
 Rare Items  
 Scanned: 51  
 Items Scanned  
 At Pennsy: 35  
 Items Paginated  
 By SIL Staff: 188

## Smithsonian Libraries’ Q3 Additions to BHL:

Items Added: 642  
 Pages Added: 244,785  
 Names Added: 896,768

## Smithsonian Libraries’ Q3 Gemini Statistics:

Non-Rare Requests  
 Received for SIL: 58  
 Rare Requests  
 Received for SIL: 37  
 Non-Rare Requests  
 Closed: 36  
 Rare Requests  
 Closed: 14  
 Non-Request Gemini Issues  
 Closed by SIL Staff: 142

# Cumulative Statistics

And for others, such as Manudev K. Madhavan, BHL has been instrumental in helping scientists track down primary source material for taxonomic research:

“[The] Biodiversity Heritage Library website has been very helpful in tracking literature for any kind of research in plants, especially for those who are working in the area of Plant taxonomy. This site has been a “treasure” for us where almost all the back volumes of the foreign journals are available. I could download the protologues of not less than 300 species from this site within one month.”

## Biodiversity Heritage Library Total Additions:

Total Items Added: 93,422  
Total Pages Added: 34,693,558  
Total Names Added: 88,063,010

## Smithsonian Libraries' Total Additions to BHL:

Total Items Added: 13,241  
Total Pages Added: 5,191,797  
Total Names Added: 17,435,338

## Smithsonian Libraries' Total Gemini Statistics:

Total Non-Rare Requests  
  Received for SIL: 201  
Total Rare Requests  
  Received for SIL: 221  
Total Non-Rare Requests  
  Resolved for SIL: 127  
Total Rare Requests  
  Resolved for SIL: 35  
Total Non-Request Gemini Issues  
  Closed by SIL Staff: 1,098

## Smithsonian Libraries' Total Items Scanned\*:

Total Non-Rare  
  Items Scanned: 12,431  
Total Rare  
  Items Scanned: 872  
Total Items  
  Scanned at Pennsy: 77

\*Total Q3 Item Statistics also represent those things scanned during Q3 but not yet ingested into BHL.

\*Total Items Scanned also represent those things that have been scanned but have not yet been added to BHL.



Top: *American entomology, or Descriptions of the Insects of North America* (1824), pl. 23  
Middle: *Erpétologie générale, ou, Histoire naturelle complète des reptiles* (1854), pl. 14  
Bottom: *Our Country's Fishes and How to Know Them* (1902), pl. 3

# Social Media

The primary goals for the social media activities performed for BHL are to foster dialogue with our users and promote our services and resources. We also hope to promote advocacy for BHL by increasing the number of “influential” users mentioning us on various social media platforms. Future goals, for which we have not yet started gathering metrics, include spurring innovation by gathering suggestions for and feedback on BHL development and providing reference and help desk support via social media. The following pages present the metrics gathered for Q3, FY11 to determine how well our efforts are meeting our goals.

## The Blog:

The primary goal of the Blog is to promote our resources. We measure our success by the amount of traffic and unique visitors to the Blog.

**Total Visit: 6,753**

(Compared to 5,402 last quarter)

**Total Unique Visitors: 5,358**

(Compared to 4,110 last quarter)

**Total SIL Blog Contributions: 22**

## BHL is Awarded the 2010 John Thackray Medal!

On May 20th, Graham Higley, head of library and information services at the Natural History Museum in London, accepted the 2010 John Thackray medal, which was awarded to the BHL in recognition of our past three years of work building our digital library. Mr. Higley (pictured left) accepted this award on behalf of Tom Garnett, Director of the BHL.

The John Thackray medal “recognizes significant achievements in the history or bibliography of natural history.” According to the website for The Society for the History of Natural History, which awards this medal, “significant achievements” specifically include “making available ... collections and/or information in new and novel ways.” While the 34 million + pages of literature that BHL has now made available for open access use, in addition to several of our special features, such as species name finding, the ability to generate your own custom PDF, and the opportunity to nominate titles for scanning, is a great start, this award serves as an encouragement to all of us at BHL to continue pushing the envelope and developing new ways to provide meaningful information and services to our users.

When asked to comment about the significance of this award for BHL, Mr. Higley responded,

“John Thackray was a past President of The Society for the History of Natural History (SHNH) and also the Archivist at the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) for several decades. It is particularly fitting that the BHL should be recognized by this award, since John and his colleagues in the SHNH made avid use of the historic collections at the NHM. It is now possible for their successors to look at or obtain copies of these rare early texts directly from the BHL, which is a truly global resource for historians as well as current scientists.”

We send a special thanks to The Society for the History of Natural History for honoring us with this award. We plan to continue to provide rare, important, and relevant biodiversity information to our users, and promise to continue developing novel ways for our users to interact with and use this content.



## Twitter:

Our primary goals for Twitter are to foster dialogue, promote our resources, and promote advocacy. To the right are the metrics we gather to determine how well we meet these goals.

### Promote Resources:

# of Clicks on Links in Tweets: 308  
 Total SIL Staff Tweets: 401  
 Reference/Collections Questions Answered via Twitter: 5

### Foster Dialogue:

Conversation Reach: .30 or 30%  
 (total @mentions+RTs/# of followers)  
 Audience Growth: 91  
 (total new followers)  
 Audience Engagement: 212  
 (total @mentions + RTs)

### Promote Advocacy:

Mentions by Influencers: 144

“I now see BHL as one of the great resources of Biodiversity Informatics. There’s some extraordinary stuff in BHL, and it keeps growing.”  
 - Rod Page, “BHL and Our Users: Rod Page & BioStor,” via BHL Blog

## Facebook:

Our primary goals for Facebook are to promote our resources and foster dialogue. To the right are the metrics we gather to determine how well we meet these goals.

### Promote Resources:

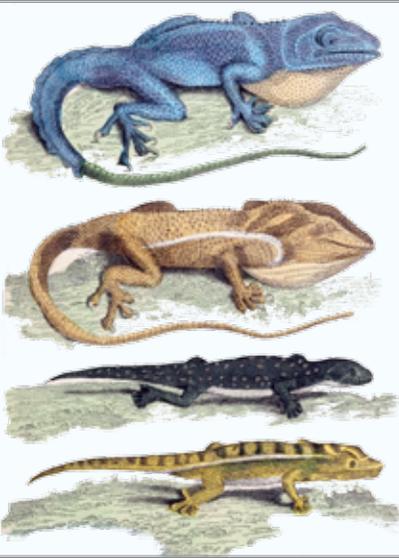
Total Post Views: 254,111  
 Most Popular Post: Question: “What biodiversity discipline is your speciality?” 47 responses  
 Total SIL Staff Posts: 213

### Foster Dialogue:

Conversation Reach: .90 or 90%  
 (total post interactions/# of ppl who like our page)  
 Audience Growth: 240  
 (total new people who like our page)  
 Audience Engagement: 974  
 (total post interactions for Q3)  
 Total Active Monthly Users by End of Q3: 973



Top Image: *Abbildungen zu Karl Illiger's Uebersetzung von Olivier's Entomologie, oder, Naturgeschichte der Insecten* (1802-03), tab. 6; Middle Image: *North American Starfishes* (1877), pl. 12; Bottom Image: *Collectanea Botanica* (1821-26), tab. 12



# Website Statistics

Left: *The Animal Kingdom, Arranged According to its Organization, Serving as a Foundation for the Natural History of Animals*, v. 2, plates (1837), pl. 15

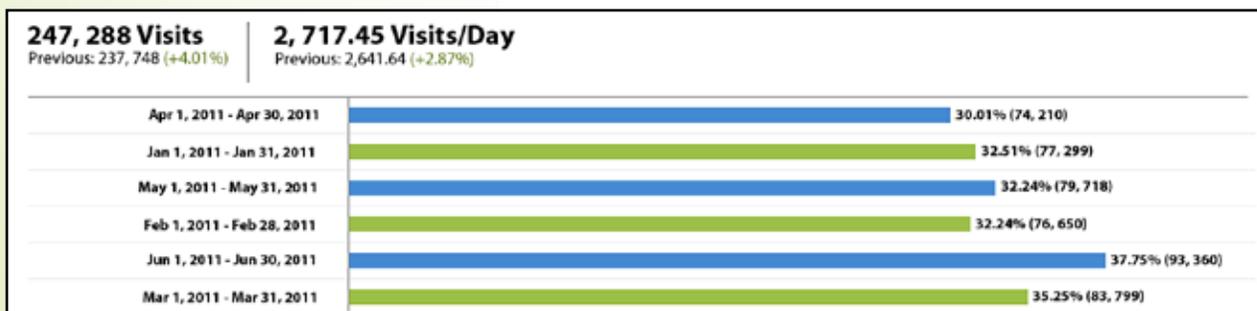
Middle Left: *D. Marcus Elieser Bloch's, ausübenden Arztes zu Berlin, Atlas* (1783), pls. 34, 41, 43, 46, 48

Middle Right: *American Spiders and their Spinning-work*, v. 3 (1893), pl. 29

Right: *Album des Orchidées de l'Europe Centrale et Septentrionale* (1899), pl. 10

For Quarter Three, Fiscal Year 2011, the Biodiversity Heritage Library had a total of 247,288 visits, with 120,929 unique visitors. This is compared to 237,748 visits and 107,124 unique visitors for Quarter Two, Fiscal Year 2011. This represents an increase of 4.01% visits from the last quarter (from 237,748 to 247,288) and 12.89% unique visitors (from 107,124 to 120,929).

## Quarter Three Web Statistics Compared to Quarter Two Web Statistics

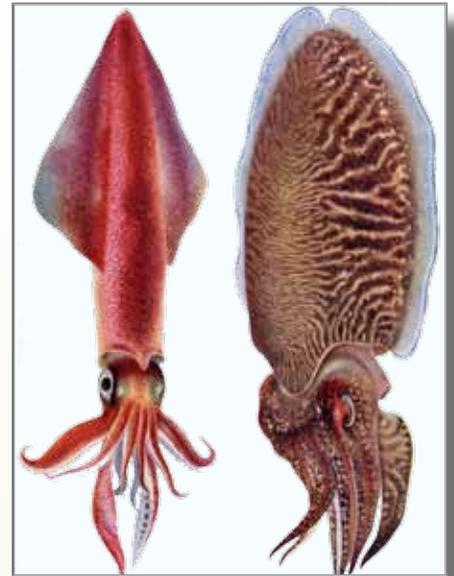


Quarter Three: ■

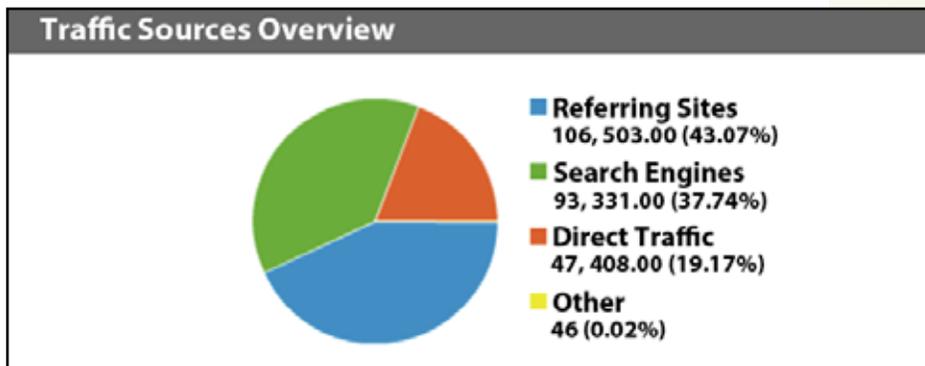
Quarter Two: ■

Top Content		
Pages	Pageviews	%Pageviews
[homepage]	90,036	7.33%
/collection/darwinlibrary	18,917	1.54%
/Default.aspx	17,899	1.46%
/browse/authors/A	14,388	1.17%
/browse/titles	14,230	1.16%

Most Visited Pages for Quarter 3



Quarter Three Web Statistics



Quarter Three Traffic Sources



Quarter Three Visitors by Month

Top: *Tintenfische; mit Besonderer Berücksichtigung von Sepia und Octopus*, von Dr. Werner Th. Meyer (1913), fig. 1-2  
 Middle: *Abbildungen zur Naturgeschichte Brasiliens* (1822), pl. 8  
 Bottom: *Album of Abyssinian Birds and Mammals* (1930), no. 10

# About BHL

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) is a consortium of 12 natural history and botanical libraries that cooperate to digitize and make accessible the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections and to make that literature available for open access and responsible use as a part of a global “biodiversity commons.”

The BHL consortium works with the international taxonomic community, rights holders, and other interested parties to ensure that this biodiversity heritage is made available to a global audience through open access principles. Today, in partnership with the Internet Archive and through local digitization efforts, BHL has digitized over 34.5 million pages of taxonomic literature, representing

Left: *Flore Pittoresque et Médicale des Antilles*, v. 1, (1821), pl.49

Middle: *Abbildungen zur Naturgeschichte Brasiliens*, (1822), pl. 21

Right: *A Flying Trip to the Tropics* (1895), pl. 1

over 47,000 titles and 93,000 volumes (June 2011).

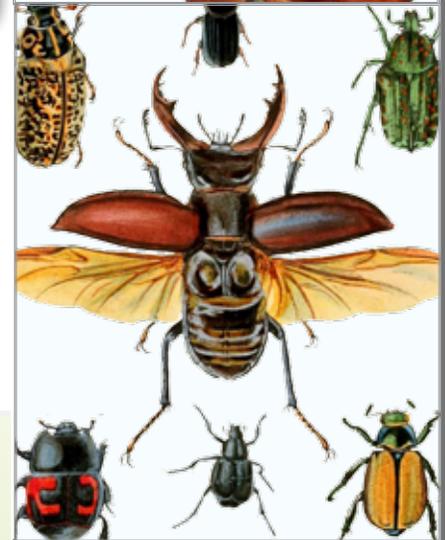
The published literature on biological diversity has limited global distribution; much of it is available in only a few select libraries in the developed world. These collections are of exceptional value because the domain of systematic biology depends more than any other science upon historic literature. Yet, this wealth of knowledge



is available only to those few who can gain direct access to significant library collections. Literature about the biota existing in developing countries is often not available within their borders. Biologists have long considered that access to the published literature is one of the chief impediments to the efficiency of research in the field. Among other results, free global access to digitized versions of the literature would repatriate information about the earth's species to all parts of the world.

Since 2009, the BHL has expanded globally. The European Commission's eContentPlus program has recently funded the BHL-Europe project, with 28 institutions, to assemble the European language literature. Additionally, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Atlas of Living Australia, Brazil (through SciELO and BIREME), and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina have created regional BHL nodes. These projects will work together to share content, protocols, services, and digital preservation practices. ■

Top: *A selection of the birds of Brazil and Mexico* (1841), pl. 75  
 Middle: *British Beetles* (1863), pl. 9  
 Bottom: *British Conchology, or, An account of the Mollusca which now Inhabit the British Isles and the Surrounding Seas*, v. 5 (1869), pl. [1]



“What a resource! I just discovered the Biodiversity Heritage Library - an online, open-access library that has digitized over 32 million pages of taxonomic literature from 45,000 books! Cha-CHING! Bookmarked. And just to give you a little taste of the deliciousness that awaits, I'm including some snappies from Dumeril's *Erpétologie Générale, ou, Histoire Naturelle Complète des Reptiles* from the Smithsonian Institution's Libraries. Talk about making science accessible. It's no exaggeration to say that this type of image is what got me interested in scientific illustration in the first place. Now I can scroll through these old tomes on my computer?! Now we do a dance of joy!!”

- Blog Post: “Biodiversity Heritage Library,”  
 Jan. 28, 2011, *An Eye for Science*



Front Image: *The Snakes of Australia* (1869), pl. 1.

Back Image: *Album of Abyssinian Birds and Mammals* (1930), no. 13