

Royal Botanic Gardens

Kew

Collaboration on a global scale: updates from the
Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL)

Inspiring discovery through free access to biodiversity knowledge.

The Biodiversity Heritage Library improves research methodology by collaboratively making biodiversity literature openly available to the world as part of a global biodiversity community.

Please read BHL's Acknowledgment of Harmful Content



Search across books and journals, scientific names, authors and subjects:

Search the catalog and full-text



[Full-text](#) [Catalog](#)

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Help Support BHL

BHL's existence depends on the financial support of its patrons. Help us keep this library open.

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (www.biodiversitylibrary.org) is an open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives.

New on the BHL Blog

Acknowledging Harm, Rethinking Collections

The Biodiversity Heritage Library has released an Acknowledgment of Harmful Content to recognize...

Flytraps, Sundews, and Pitchers: Dissecting the Carnivorous

Today's Picks Flickr Stream



Featured Content Women in Natural History



The background features a light-colored surface with several detailed illustrations of crabs in various colors (orange, red, blue, and brown). Overlaid on this is a large, semi-transparent blue rectangle containing white and orange text. In the top left corner, there is a small yellow speech bubble icon. At the top center, there are faint, handwritten-style sketches of crabs.

Inspiring Discovery through Free Access
to Biodiversity Knowledge

15+ years of inspiring discovery
through free & open access

to biodiversity literature & archives

from the 15th-21st centuries

Mission

The Biodiversity Heritage Library improves research methodology by collaboratively making biodiversity literature openly available to the world as part of a global biodiversity community.



60+ MILLION
PAGES

179,000+ | 286,000+
TITLES | VOLUMES

244+ MILLION
INSTANCES OF TAXONOMIC NAMES

 822+
IN-COPYRIGHT TITLES LICENSED FOR BHL

AGREEMENTS
WITH | 372+
LICENSORS

Latest news – highlights

- 9 May 2022 marked 15 years of the BHL portal
- BHL and the pandemic: collective resilience
- New users and increased recognition of BHL's value
- Strategic Plan 2020-25
- Annual meeting held in conjunction with the SPNHC conference



Truly global collaboration



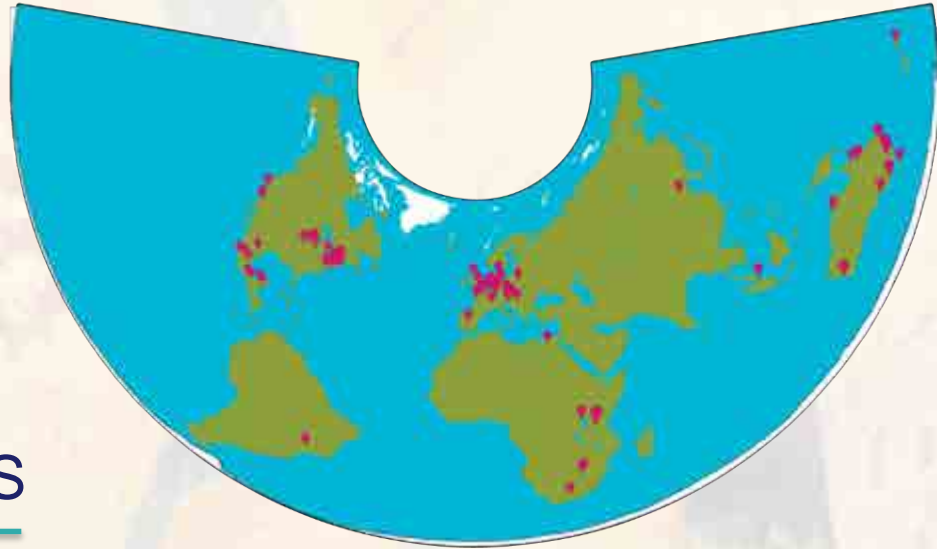
BHL in 2006

From 9 founding institutions
to 88 institutions



BHL at 15 years

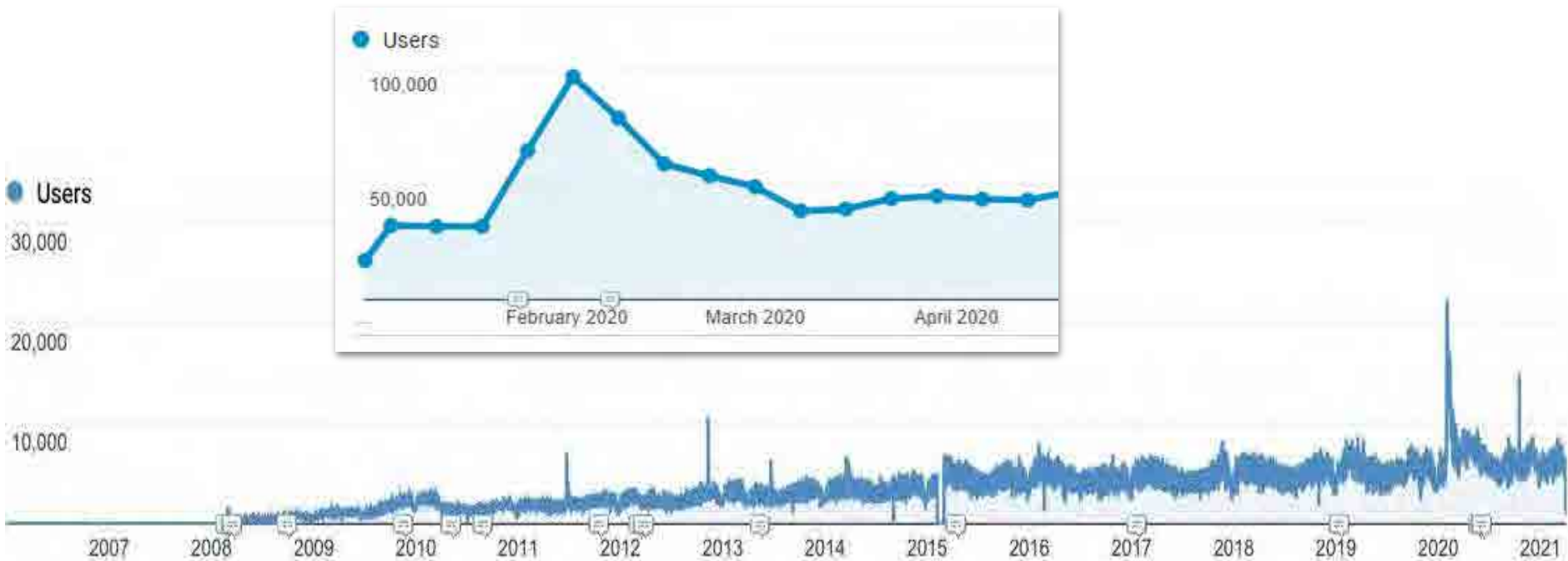
BHL is a Global Consortium



19 MEMBERS
22 AFFILIATES
AS OF OCTOBER 2022

100+ WORLDWIDE PARTNERS

User Growth over 15 Years




Empowering ongoing research during COVID

"My graduate-level [Museum Studies] class...was taken online when New York University shut down. Since the shut-down, the biggest issue for my students has been in conducting research...I've been working with them to use BHL's collections to shape their projects and conduct primary source research online. BHL has emerged as one of the most popular databases for primary source work!"

DR. ELAINE AYERS
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY



 **Dr Erica McAlister** @flygirlNHM - Aug 14, 2020

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

 **Julia Grob** @JuliaGrob

Replying to @museums and @BioDivLibrary

At University of Houston Special Collections, we are using the @BioDivLibrary to help us research an exhibition on birds remotely while we can't be with our books. So appreciative of this resource!

8:33 AM - Apr 22, 2020 · Twitter Web App

 **Jordan Thomas Myerson** @JThomasMy

So appreciative of this and the @BioDivLibrary in general — it's a difficult time to start one's research year, but resources like this make all the difference

NYM Library/Archives @NYM_Library · Aug 2, 2020
NYM @BioDivLibrary collection of publications from @nyml_present and @nyml_research (Natural History Foundation one stop for @nyml @nymlcollections)

2:49 PM - Aug 2, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

 **IWM Orlogy** @IWMOrlogy

As a Curator @IWM_Landish one of the things I miss most is our @IWM_Library, especially when answering enquiries! We have one of the world's best ornithological libraries @IWM, but we can all explore 58 million pages of natural history @BioDivLibrary [biodiversitylibrary.org/page/7582017](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/7582017)



7:52 PM - Apr 15, 2020 · Twitter Web App

 **Ashleigh Whittle** @ashwhittle

Love & appreciation for @BioDivLibrary like never before! Checking through old texts on @BioDiv, for an upcoming collaboration. #BirdingWorkshop = no access to our @IWM library - but BHL has got me covered. Thank you! #CarlinBoffles #TeamBoots #TeamNoisyTuesday



7:53 PM - Apr 23, 2020 · Twitter Web App



BHL's Natural Ecosystem

- Global partnerships
- Virtual collaboration
- Social distancing
- Open access/Open science
- Wider society benefit through open culture/open knowledge
- Collective resiliency

BHL Strategy 2020-2025:

- Incorporating lessons from the pandemic
- Relevant Content: Collection Policy Review
 - Social justice/Gaps/Historical context/Open knowledge
- Tools and services
 - Namefinding/Data/Persistent identifiers/Extended specimen network/
- User Engagement
 - Leverage global partners/widen the audience
- Partnerships and Alliances
 - Extending collaborations beyond science
- Mission enabling
 - Sustainable model/meaningful value for partners

Link to public strategy: <http://about.biodiversitylibrary.org/#StrategicPlan>

- A truly global hybrid
- Two BHL symposia:
 - i. Liberating Natural History Collections Data in Biodiversity Literature
 - ii. Reflections on the Biodiversity Heritage Library: Value in Collections and Collaboration
- Discussions around technical priorities, user engagement and the Collection Development Policy.



BHL GOVERNANCE

Executive Committee

BHL Members' Council (2022-2024)

CHAIR

David Iggulden
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

VICE-CHAIR

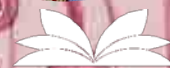
Kelli Trei
*University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign*

CO-SECRETARY

Elisa Herrmann
Museum für Naturkunde

CO-SECRETARY

Kevin Merriman
Yale University



BHL
Biodiversity Heritage Library

Revisions to the BHL CDP

- Need to address harmful content in BHL – statement
- Move away from an internal policy for partners - single public policy
- Partner expectations appendicy
- BHL's role as an active disseminator of biodiversity info, responsible for what and how these materials are shared with a global audience
- Achieving more complete and inclusive representation of available knowledge and perspectives on biodiversity



Enhancements to the OCR

- Internet Archive move to Tesseract Open Source OCR engine
- Existing text content
- Improved identification of scientific names - partnership with Global Names Architecture to identify scientific names in BHL text

- HONEYSUCKLE, BUSH (*Lonicera Morrow!*) Early white
 - flowers in June, followed by red berries.
 + HONEYSUCKLE, BUSH (*Lonicera Morrowi*). Early white
 + flowers in June, followed by red berries.
 PINK MAGNOLIA
 (*Magnolia Soulangeana*)
 (*Magnolia Soulangeana*)
 Our most outstanding early spring blooming plant. Large
 pink blooms. Grows in bush or tree form. Every garden
 should have one or two of these remarkable plants.
 Prices - Strong Field Grown Plants - Each \$2.75; 2 for \$4.90.
 SYRINGA, SWEET MOCK ORANGE or GARLAND (*Phila-*
delphus Coronarius). Of upright habit, and produces
 in June a wealth of white, fragrant flowers.
 + Prices-Strong Field Grown Plants-Each \$2.75; 2 for \$4.90.
 SYRINGA, SWEET MOCK ORANGE or GARLAND (*Phila-*
delphus Coronarius). Of upright habit, and produces

“BHL is an invaluable resource for me and my team in our work with plant nomenclature. The Code of Nomenclature for plants, algae and fungi is based on a system with priority being one of the most important rules, and the priority for plant names dates back to 1753! This means we are constantly searching through old texts and journals, and having those online and available anywhere speeds up our work enormously”.



Heather Lindon
Content Editor, Plant Names
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew





Thank you!

Questions?

David Iggulden

19.10.22 | European Botanical & Horticultural Libraries Group Meeting

www.biodiversitylibrary.org

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