NETWATCH
edited by MITCH LESLIE

RESOURCE

Mexican Biodiversity Trove

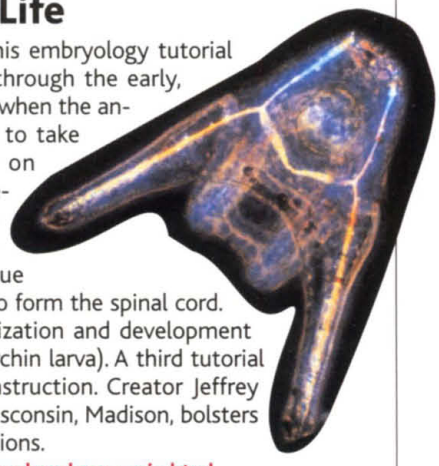
The Internet has breathed new life into museum collections by allowing specimen data to be shared online. One portal for such data is the Mexican National Commission on Biodiversity's (Conabio's) site. Its World Information Network on Biodiversity tool trawls plant and animal databases of more than 6 million specimens (two-thirds with location data) from museums in North and Central America and Spain. If you're seeking possible haunts of the Mexican long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris nivalis*, *above*), for example, you can map where the bat has been found along with the cacti (*Neobuxbaumia*) that it pollinates.

Conabio's main site is also packed with other information, although it's mostly in Spanish. You can look up Mexican taxonomists, download software for cataloging specimens, or peruse a guide to Mexico's endangered birds and mammals. And a fires page keeps tab on wildfires in the southern United States, Mexico, and Guatemala with daily satellite images and interactive maps.

www.conabio.gob.mx/remib_ingles/doctos/remib_ing.html

TUTORIAL

A Good Start in Life



Geared for undergraduates, this embryology tutorial leads students step by step through the early, hectic stages of development, when the animal's basic body plan starts to take shape. One section focuses on amphibians, highlighting milestones from egg formation and fertilization to neurulation, when two ridges of tissue curl together along the back to form the spinal cord. The second part probes fertilization and development in sea urchins (*above*, a sea urchin larva). A third tutorial on the zebrafish is under construction. Creator Jeffrey Hardin of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, bolsters the text with films and animations.

worms.zoology.wisc.edu/embryology_main.html

CATALOG

Keep Your Craters Straight

With thousands of valleys, prominences, mountains, and plains in our solar system, even experts can get ensnared in terminology. There's the Bach crater on Mercury, not to be confused with the Bachira crater on Venus or the Bacht crater on Mars or the Back crater on our moon. Bringing order to the tangle of names is the Gazetteer of Planetary Nomenclature from the U.S. Geological Survey's Astrogeology Research Program. The site lists the official names and locations for mountains, craters, and other surface features on our neighboring planets and their moons.

planetarynames.wr.usgs.gov

DATABASE

Whole Enzyme Catalog

Enzymes are the cell's blue-collar workers, taking on vital jobs such as copying DNA, breaking down food, and defanging toxic metabolites. To track down information on the function, structure, and activity of enzymes, visit BRENDA, a massive database curated by biochemist Dietmar Schomburg and colleagues at the University of Cologne in Germany. The team gleaned from the literature chemical details for some 3500 enzymes and compiled a data-rich biography for each. You can find out, for instance, what reaction the enzyme catalyzes and what compounds inhibit or activate it; where in the cell it works; the optimum temperature and pH for the reaction; how to store a sample; and whether it is implicated in any diseases. Besides enzyme name, you can search the data by function, chemical properties, and other criteria. For academics and researchers at nonprofit organizations, access to BRENDA is free with registration.

www.brenda.uni-koeln.de

EXHIBIT

The Happy Cadaver

You won't see an image like this in *Gray's Anatomy*. But early anatomy texts often depicted smiling, cavorting bodies flaunting their dangling innards and exposed muscles, as in this 1681 sketch by artist John Browne. Although it seems macabre today, the "cadaver at play" convention was one step toward the modern scientific drawing. Find out more about the evolution of anatomical illustration at the fascinating Dream Anatomy Web site, an online version of an exhibition that opened 9 October at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland.

Featuring works from ancient Egypt to the present day, the exhibit highlights the trend toward greater realism and accuracy, led by scientists and artists such as the Italian anatomist Andreas Vesalius. His meticulous 1543 text is considered the first modern anatomy book. Although the physical exhibit ends next July, the Web version will continue to grow, says curator-historian Michael Sappol.

www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/dreamanatomy/index.html

Send site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org. Archive: www.sciencemag.org/netwatch

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