

For Immediate Release

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EOL officials are available for interviews

Celebrating EOL Partners: Atlas of Living Australia's Public Launch a Success

EOL's global network expands as Atlas of Living Australia comes online

Washington, DC, December 8, 2010 - The Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) recently announced the public launch of its freely-accessible online biodiversity portal. The ALA is a national scientific collaboration between the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), the Australian natural history collections community and the Australian Government.

The ALA seeks to include information on the millions of specimens held in Australian national collections in its effort to build understanding of the Australian biosphere. It currently holds over 23 million records on the distribution of Australia's fauna and flora, in addition to maps, images and literature.

As a regional Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), there is an active collaboration between both project teams. ALA's rich species information will soon be available through EOL, and ALA is currently leveraging EOL data and application programming interfaces (APIs) to help populate its databases.

ALA and EOL are also both building active communities of users and contributors. Working together, the initiatives will foster the free and open exchange of biodiversity information to support science and increase public understanding of living nature.

"As one of the first regional EOLs, the public launch of ALA is an important milestone in making trusted biodiversity information more accessible to people around the world," said Dr. Erick Mata, incoming Executive Director of EOL.

Dr. Joanne Daly, Strategic Advisor for the CSIRO, remarked, "This event is the beginning of an expanded global community of users and contributors for ALA and EOL. The partnership strengthens both projects."

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About the Encyclopedia of Life: The Encyclopedia of Life operates as an ongoing collaboration among its cornerstone institutions and international partners, with the common goal to gather and share knowledge about all forms of life. It aims to provide freely accessible information for users around the world about all of the 1.9 million known species on our planet. Please visit www.eol.org for more information.

About the Atlas of Living Australia: The Atlas of Living Australia, an EOL partner, is building infrastructure and tools to enable researchers and other users of biodiversity information to find, access, combine and visualize data on Australian plants and animals. It aims to enable any user to quickly locate and access information across the Internet on all aspects of Australian biodiversity. Please visit www.ala.org.au for more information.