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San Diego Public Library Project Has a Few Bugs in It

CATALOG OF LIFE COLLECTS INSECTS FOR DNA BARCODING

SAN DIEGO – One of the newest projects at the San Diego Public Library has a few bugs in it. Actually, there are more than 1,200 bugs with hopes there will be more. Launched in March, the Catalog of Life project is a Library initiative to create a catalog of insect life in San Diego by using LifeScanner species identification kits and the help of Library cardholders to collect insects.

The Centre for Biodiversity Genomics has processed 1,237 specimens collected by San Diego citizen scientists and reports that the Catalog of Life project will contribute 33 new invertebrate species to the International Barcode of Life (iBOL) database, including species of the earwig, silverfish, a fungus gnat and a ground crab spider. The Catalog of Life project is also contributing new data about the range of some invertebrates to the iBOL database because 29 invertebrate species analyzed had never been collected in California, and 27 invertebrate species had never been logged inside the United States.

“This is the first time the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics has partnered with a public library to roll out a citizen science program of this size,” said Dirk Steinke, Ph.D., Associate Director, Research Coordination, Centre for Biodiversity Genomics at the Biodiversity Institute of Ontario. **“San Diego was an ideal location for this type of program because it is a biodiversity hotspot, and collaborating with the City of San Diego Public Library has been an invaluable experience for us.”**

Steinke will share the initial findings of the Catalog of Life project and about DNA barcoding at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 13, 2017 at the San Diego Central Library. This free, public presentation is part of the closing event for the Library’s Spring into STEAM program, which is part of the San Diego Public Library’s initiative to make science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics more accessible for youth. The event will also feature a kid-friendly presentation by an entomologist and a local bee keeper.

“The San Diego Public Library is excited to offer our patrons the opportunity to become citizen scientists and contribute to the understanding of the diversity of insect life in our region,” said

Misty Jones, Director, San Diego Public Library. "The outstanding participation in our Catalog of Life project and the attendance at our Spring into STEAM hands-on events show that our communities are looking for more programming focused on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics."

LifeScanner species identification kits are still available to check out at any of the Library's 36 [locations](#). Each kit contains collection instructions, a pair of tweezers, four collection tubes containing DNA preservation fluid, and a bio-materials bag for the vials containing collected species. When the species identification kits are returned to the Library, the Library sends the insect samples to a lab at the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics for DNA barcoding. DNA barcoding identifies species using a short section of DNA, selected from a standardized region of the genome. The section used for most animals is a 648 base-pair region of the genome that is short enough to be sequenced quickly but long enough to show variations between species.

About the San Diego Public Library

With a vision of being the place for opportunity, discovery and inspiration, the San Diego Public Library is a hub for knowledge and lifelong learning. As the largest library system in the region, it serves a population of more than 1.3 million people. Learn about events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to programs and resources or search for materials in the online catalog at www.sandiegolibrary.org.

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