

MBP Highlights - March 2017

March was another fantastic month for Maryland Biodiversity Project. Jim and I would like to thank all our contributors and editors for an amazing month. Please read some of the many highlights for March below.

- We held our extremely productive second MBP Facebook Blitz - American Sycamore! We received a ton of data and thousands more people know about sycamores, their relationships, and riparian habitat.
- We continued to focus outreach efforts on the Maryland Plant Atlas and have seen a lot more folks engaged and working on filling in quad records. Very exciting. Thank you!
- We led an awesome field trip to Worcester and Wicomico Counties on 3/25 with our largest group to date. In addition to the lovely day, we added 10 new MBP county records and nearly 100 quad records (so far)!
- We worked with Bob and Jo Solem to ingest thousands of quad-level records from their amazing Howard Co. database. This included 9,300 ode (dragonfly/damselfly) records alone! Thank you!
- We improved the web site's security by enabling HTTPS everywhere. We improved the auto-archiving of all featured images in the cloud (AWS).
- We completed code updates that allow the new Howard County Conservancy (HCC) sub-site to show total records and latest additions while entering data by specific USGS quad (<https://www.marylandbiodiversity.com/sites/hcc/>). Our big BioBlitz effort this year will be at HCC in August.
- We processed hundreds of new HCC records by MBP editors and contributors. Special thanks to Bob and Jo Solem, Kevin Heffernan, Bonnie Ott, Nancy Magnusson, Richard Orr, Tim Reichard. We're already at 709 species for the site and we have a lot more photos to process. We processed all photos from Kevin Heffernan's lovely HCC bird and butterfly galleries.
- Editor Bob Solem completed an extensive fungi taxonomic review and we worked together to complete the updates.
- Editor Nancy Magnusson did a thorough review of our bibliography and did a wonderful job standardizing the content (<https://www.marylandbiodiversity.com/references.php>)
- We promoted a post on youth birding (YMOS Mighty Merlins! Follow them on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/YMOS-Mighty-Merlins-278016975968466/>). We emphasized the problem of Emerald Ash Borer damage and the severe risk to our region's ash trees.
- Jim met with Dennis Whigham of the Smithsonian and North American Orchid Conservation Center to discuss ways MBP could help with their research during the upcoming field season. MBP is featured prominently on the North American Orchid Conservation Center's "Lost Orchids of Maryland Gallery" on their excellent website: <http://northamericanorchidcenter.org/lost-orchids-of-maryland/>.

- Jim attended "I Bird, I Vote" Bird Conservation Summit.
- Editor Ben Coulter prepared specimen records for Brachygluta beetles (data-mining effort), continued drafting species accounts for all Maryland butterflies (Lycaenidae - hairstreaks, azures - are nearly complete), and started mining Creative Commons ant specimen photos from awesome AntWeb.org web site (sample: <https://www.marylandbiodiversity.com/viewSpecies.php?species=9386>).
- We created new reports for "New Stuff" and "Record/Photo Counts" by day / month. The former tallies all new state, county, quad, and month records for MBP for the day or month. The latter tallies total records and photos contributed.
- We incorporated a base Maryland algae checklist created by Dr. John Hall.
- We broke 7,000 likes on Facebook. Over 30,000 people viewed posts at MBP Facebook in March.
- We processed 12,693 records and 2,868 photos, of which 852 photos were taken during the March window. (There's that handy report!)
- We wrote daily Maryland natural history posts on Facebook; near daily posts on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/MDBiodiversity>).

Donations are welcome to help keep up the growth and momentum. Click "Donate" in the top-right corner of any MBP page!