

IMAGES

Cannes of Worms

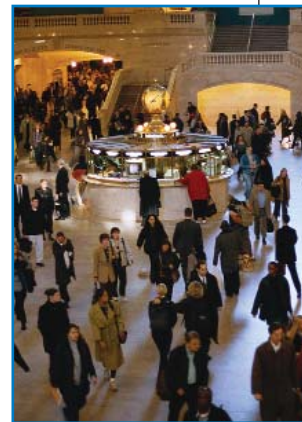
This virtual cinema screens more films than your local multiplex, all featuring the same lab superstar, the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* (above), a favorite for probing embryonic development. The flicks capture worms slithering, mating, and slurping their dinner, but most focus on how the nematode takes shape. The collection comes from developmental biologist and auteur Bob Goldstein of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Along with productions from Goldstein's lab, the site links to more than 20 other worm studios. One time-lapse movie tracks the entire 15-hour process of development, as a grainy fertilized egg cleaves, seethes, and swirls, finally coalescing into a squirming nematode. Or watch cells migrate to the embryo's interior during gastrulation, which sets up the three-layered construction characteristic of most animals.

www.bio.unc.edu/faculty/goldstein/lab/movies.html

RESOURCES

Demographer's Delight

Need to know how infant mortality rates have changed in Asia over the last 2 decades, or the projected population of Zimbabwe in 2050? Try tapping these two rich veins of statistics. POPIN* is a clearinghouse of population data from the United Nations. One highlight is an online database that provides current values and projections for 28 key population variables, including size, growth rate, and density. You can break down the figures by country, region, and continent and look out as far as 2050. You can also access a wealth of other stats gathered by UN agencies, such as country-by-country estimates of numbers of HIV-infected people. Another source of demographic information is the Population Reference Bureau,† a Washington, D.C.–based non-profit. Along with articles on topics such as the parlous state of U.S. health care for the elderly and population displacements due to strife in Colombia, the site serves up plenty of raw data. Published annually, the handy World Population Data Sheet collates midyear estimates of population size, birth and death rates, and other vital stats for every country.*



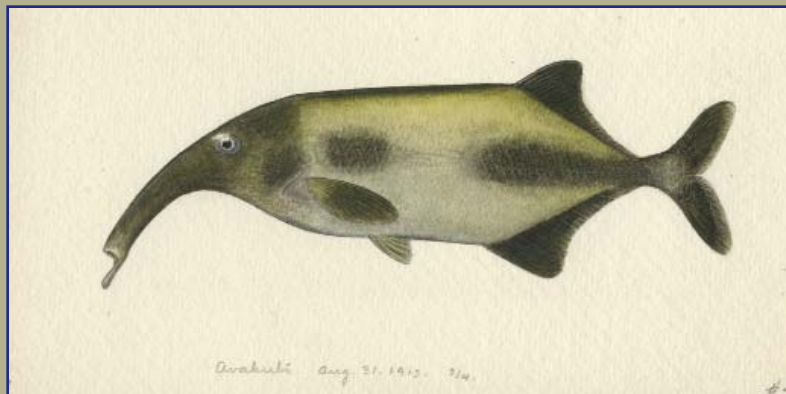
www.un.org/popin
† www.prb.org

EDUCATION

Science for the People

Taking their cue from a series of popular radio broadcasts in the 1950s, the jargon-free Mill Hill Essays offer straight talk about timely questions in medicine and biology. Published annually for the last 7 years by Britain's National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), the essays aim to explain to a general audience subjects as diverse as the controversy over xenotransplantation and the origin of the 1918–19 "Spanish" flu. In the latest set, Tom Kirkwood, an authority on aging at Newcastle University, U.K., describes how genes for longevity mesh with our understanding of the evolution of senescence, and NIMR scientist Robin Lovell-Badge explores the promise and pitfalls of stem cells.

www.nimr.mrc.ac.uk/millhill essays/2001



EXHIBIT

Call of the Congo

They came, they saw, they pickled. Between 1909 and 1915, naturalists James Chapin and Herbert Lang ventured deep into the forests and savannas of the Congo, then a little-explored Belgian colony. This new online exhibition from the American Museum of Natural History in New York City—which underwrote Chapin and Lang's travels—recounts the expedition, the first to systematically survey the creatures of the northeastern Congo.

Chapin was a 19-year-old undergraduate, and Lang was a German mammalogist working for the museum. Scheduled to last 2 years, their trip stretched to nearly six, and you can retrace the naturalists' steps down rivers and through jungles with interactive maps and a narrated slide show. Although they failed to bring back a live okapi, a reclusive cousin of the giraffe that was one of their objectives, their haul still amounted to more than 100,000 specimens. Visit the site's digital collection to sift through 2000 of Lang's pictures, read the pair's field notes, or browse a photo archive of axes, ornate knives, clothing, and other artifacts from the region's inhabitants. Another gallery showcases examples of Chapin's 300 sketches and watercolors, such as this droopy-nosed electric fish (above).

diglib1.amnh.org