

# FALL 2016 BIOL310 - Extra-credit FAQ's

## 1) What is it?

WeDigBio.org is an international event that raises awareness of the importance of biodiversity research collections and engages volunteers in liberating data from these collections so that more scientists (and the public) can access them for research and educational purposes. This event is funded by the US National Science Foundation and is part of the research program of Professor Weeks.

## 2) When is this extra credit opportunity held?

October 20-23, 2016 (online participation anywhere) and/or October 21, 2016 (face-to-face, Fenwick Library).

## 3) What am I going to be asked to do?

You will be transcribing label information from very high-resolution images of natural history collections online via a very use-friendly interface called NotesfromNature.org. Many will be from Virginia.

## 4) Where is it held?

You can do this **at home** or anywhere you have access to a computer and the internet on October 20-23. There will also be a free, **alternative and optional face-to-face event** on October 21 in Fenwick Library room 2001 including refreshments & door prizes. This free, alternative and optional face-to-face event will take about 40 minutes and requires Eventbrite registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/george-mason-university-wedigbio-transcription-blitz-october-21-2016-tickets-26489838821>. The in-person event will be open to the entire University community; RSVP early & invite your friends!

## 5) Why should I consider doing this besides the 5 pts of extra credit?

Cultures around the world have spent centuries collecting and documenting life on earth, yet much of this information is not accessible in an electronic format. One of the Grand Challenges of this century is liberating these data to help us manage the health of our environment by creating a full account of the diversity and distributions of all organisms. This 21<sup>st</sup> century field of science is called biodiversity informatics and is worth exploring!

## 6) How will I get credit for participating?

You will take a screenshot of your tally from within NotesfromNature.org and post it to the BIOL310 Blackboard Assignment. The screenshot should be uploaded between October 20 and 11:59 pm October 23. Late submissions are not accepted.

## 7) How long will it take?

About 40 minutes.

## 8) What are the precise steps to do this?

1. Sometime between October 20-23 point your browser to NotesfromNature.org. Web traffic will be monitored by NSF and my research collaborators during this period of time.

2. Click Login > Click “sign up” at bottom of page > Enter Mason username, your full name, and Mason email address > Choose a password > Read & check the Privacy Policy statement > Click button that says “Sign Up.”

3. Once signed in to NotesfromNature.org, choose a taxonomic group to work on by clicking on its circular icon. Within the taxonomic group of your choice, click a specific transcription Expedition to work on. Hint: Mason natural history specimens are being served on the Plants of Virginia Expedition.

4. Once within an Expedition, follow the prompt to read the specimen label and transcribe the label data into the appropriate database fields. There are typically “help” or “?” symbols that offer guidance for different tasks. When you are finished with each label, be sure to click “Done”.

5. Complete at least 20 specimens – which should take about 30-40 minutes of your time. You must be signed in to Notes from Nature while doing transcriptions in order to get credit for doing them.

6. When you are finished, find Your Stats tab that shows the tally of your completed transcriptions. To find this, view a data entry page within an active Expedition. In the upper right corner of the window, click the circular compass icon. You should see your login-name appear, click it to see your Profile page and navigate to Your Stats window (Figure 1). Your tally will appear as a number in the Notes from Nature tile.

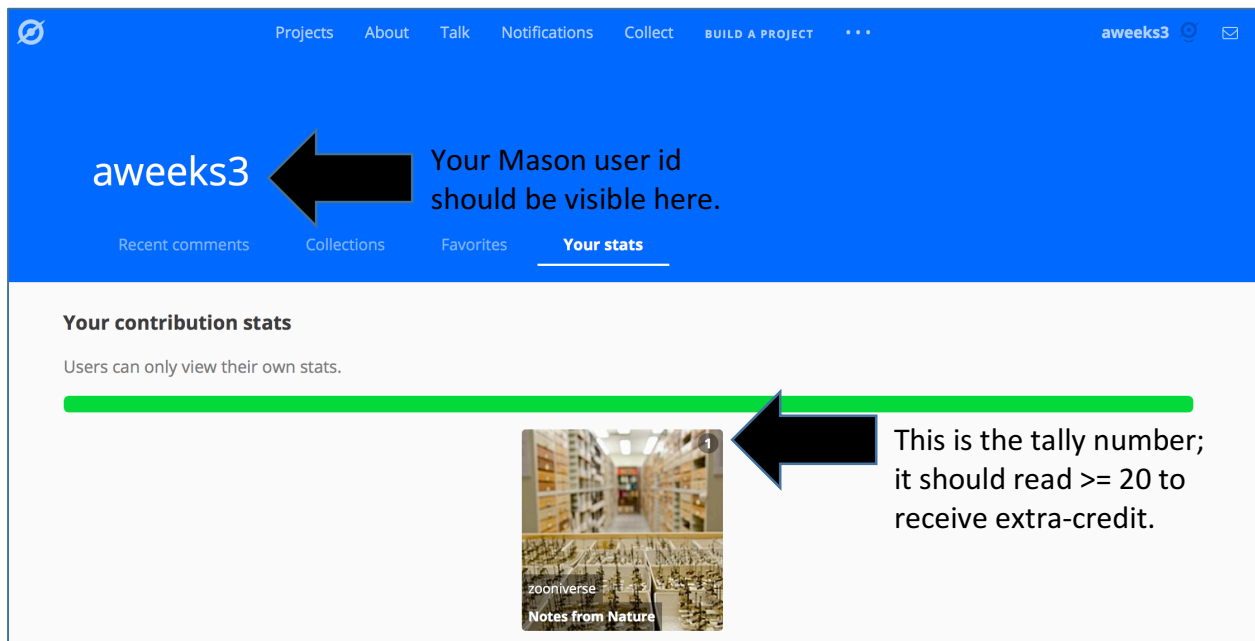


Figure 1. This is the type of screenshot you should be uploading to Blackboard.

7. Take a screenshot of the window showing Your Stats (Figure 1). There are many ways to do this. On a Mac, press Shift+Command+4 buttons and drag cross hairs over the active window. This saves the screen shot to the Mac desktop. On a Windows PC, press Alt+PrntScrn buttons, which captures the active window. This saves the screenshot to the PC clipboard – so you’ll have to paste it (Ctrl+V) into MS Word, Paint, or similar to save it. You can upload any file type (.png, .jpg, .pdf, .doc) to Blackboard.

8. Upload this screenshot (any file type: .png, .jpg, pdf, .doc) to the BIOL310 Blackboard Assignment for the extra credit. **It must be uploaded by 11:59 pm October 23.** That is it!