



NBII Mid-Atlantic Information Node

Your gateway to data
and information on
biological resources in
the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Background

The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) <www.nbii.gov> is an electronic information network that provides access to biological data and information on our nation's plants, animals, and ecosystems. Data and information maintained by federal, state, and local government agencies; non-government organizations; and private-sector organizations are linked through the NBII gateway and made accessible to a variety of audiences including researchers, natural resource managers, decision-makers, educators, students, and other citizens.

Implementation of the NBII is being accomplished through the development of "nodes" that serve as interconnected entry points to the NBII and the information held by partners. Nodes are organized by themes or regions; one of the newest regional nodes is the Mid-Atlantic Information Node (MAIN).

MAIN

MAIN seeks to encourage access to and use of biological resource information for the region, which covers Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The region is unique in its ecological breadth. While dominated by the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the region's natural features vary widely, from Frasier fir forests in the Central Appalachians to important wetland areas such as Blackwater and the Great Dismal Swamp. The region is also characterized by a



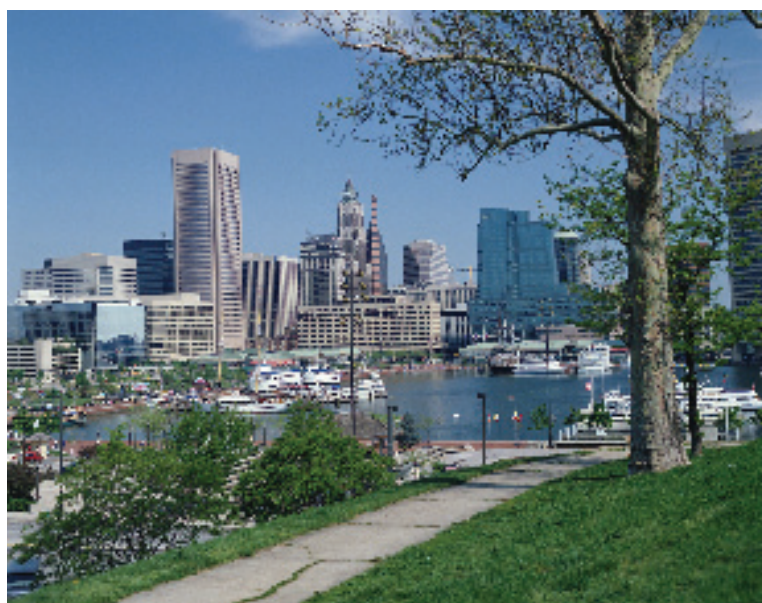
Photo credit: Charles Warren

Great Blue Heron

range of biological resource problems and stressors, and a large and rapidly growing human population.

Issues such as pollution, endangered species, invasive species, acid precipitation, habitat fragmentation, urbanization, transportation, sprawl, and water quality are the subject of public discourse in the region. These issues combine to create a strong need for coordination and collaboration among the many stakeholders involved in biological resources management.

The NBII envisions MAIN to be a leader in the distribution of regional data sets and systems. It will include textual and geospatial information and will integrate other online resources. An important component of the MAIN project has been to establish a geospatial framework that can be used to organize and distribute regional data sets. In addition, the program has undergone a needs assessment and strategic planning process to clarify the needs of users and data providers and to identify existing data sources and gaps.



Baltimore's Inner Harbor



Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia hirta)

Other projects in the Mid-Atlantic Region include:

- Supporting data management efforts in the Central Appalachians;

- Disseminating biological resource information to teachers in urban settings;
- Developing decision support tools that enable land trusts to incorporate conservation values in the prioritization of land use decisions;
- Working to compile regional baseline data from which we can identify future projects or areas requiring special consideration; and
- Creating an online catalog for aerial photographs from across the region.

For More Information

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Find us on the Web at:
<<http://main.nbii.org>>.

Banner photos: great blue heron and pink lady slipper, by Charles Warren.