

Astrobiology News March 2020: Ideas from the *Zooniverse*

As we're witnessing an increasing number of cancelled events and institutional closures (including my own) due to uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, I thought I'd share some ways that everyone can assuage anxiety and boredom, while furthering important research, even if you're temporarily isolated. I realize this isn't exactly "astrobiology news," but isn't it a good time to contribute to medical research in general, or perhaps celebrate Women's History Month without leaving your house?

At the time I'm writing this, there are seven active medical research projects on *Zooniverse*.¹ The most popular is *Bash the Bug*,² where you can help the researchers fight resistance to antibiotics. On the other hand, the project that needs the most help is *Rodent Little Brother: Secret Lives of Mice*,³ where you can assist important research into human illnesses, while improving the study and care of mice. Perhaps you'd like to explore eye health, changes in cell biology due to diseases, or quality of life issues for urban dwellers? You can find these and more among the medical research projects available on *Zooniverse*! You don't even have to create a username and password to participate, if you don't want to.

How about contributing to research on the groundbreaking work of early 20th century women astronomers through *Star Notes*⁴ to celebrate Women's History Month? Participants peruse the notebooks of "Harvard Computers" Williamina Fleming, Annie Jump Cannon, Henrietta Swan Leavitt, and many others to help link their notebooks to the glass plate photographs that gave us our first picture of the visible universe. Connecting black history and women's history is *Transcribe Cooper*,⁵ an interdisciplinary project delving into the personal correspondence of African-American feminist Anna Julia Cooper, which could reshape our understanding of Black political thought at the dawn of the twentieth century.

These are just a few samples of fascinating and relevant research everyone can explore. There are currently 101 active projects across *Zooniverse*⁶ - the most recent include understanding babies' speech sounds and expanding access to electricity in Africa. Next month, I'll get back to the "astrobiology" part of my column, but I hope to present one or two enticing *Zooniverse* projects each month!

Stay healthy.
Until next month,

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¹ [Zooniverse Medical Projects](https://www.zooniverse.org/projects?discipline=medicine&page=1&status=live)

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² [Zooniverse Bash the Bug Project](https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/mrniaboc/bash-the-bug?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=bashthebug-CLP-0320) (https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/mrniaboc/bash-the-bug?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=bashthebug-CLP-0320)

³ [Zooniverse Rodent Project](https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/r-dot-bains/rodent-little-brother-secret-lives-of-mice) (<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/r-dot-bains/rodent-little-brother-secret-lives-of-mice>)

⁴ [Zooniverse Star Notes Project](https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/projectphaedra/star-notes)
(https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/projectphaedra/star-notes?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=starNotes-CLP-0320)

⁵ <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/transcribecooper/transcribe-cooper>

⁶ <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects>