

Sequencing genomes of entire microcosmic ecosystems

Viruses are the most abundant entities on the planet—and among the most mysterious. Mya Breitbart, a microbial ecologist at the University of South Florida, has figured out how to quickly decipher what they are and what they're doing.

Rather than try to isolate individual virus species from a sample—there are up to 10 billion viruses in a liter of seawater—Breitbart extracts all the genetic material present, chops it into smaller pieces, and sequences those pieces simultaneously. The technique, which she likens to assembling multiple puzzles at the same time, enables her to study the entire community at once.

Read the full, original story here: [How Mya Breitbart Is Mapping The Genomes Of Entire Ecosystems](#)