

Natural Science Collections A National Resource

About Natural Science Collections

Natural science collections house irreplaceable anthropological, biological, environmental, and geological specimens that provide a historical and cultural picture of the natural history and diversity of Earth. Natural science collections, generally a part of natural history museums or university science departments, are vital components of our scientific research enterprise, and centrally important to formal and informal science education.



The Facts

--Median annual attendance for Botanic Gardens is 106,235; Natural History Museums is 62,803. (American Association of Museums 2006)

--Natural science specimens make up over 800 million items in the inventoried United States collections found in museums, universities, scientific research organizations, and libraries.

Opportunities & Benefits

Scientists and policy makers rely on natural science collections and the data they contain for making appropriate environmental decisions, understanding the value of our natural resources, and providing insight into emerging diseases and new drug therapies. Moreover, natural science collections drive fundamental discovery.

Preserving biological diversity is vital to decision making but also to the world's food and energy supplies. Collections help us map the locations and health of the planet's biodiversity, natural resources, and provide the knowledge for protecting those resources.

Education, Knowledge, and Heritage

Collections inspire people of all ages and interests, through museum exhibitions, natural history guides, and education programs. They embody the richness and diversity of our heritage by revealing a five billion year history of changes in Earth's geology, climate, and life forms.



Collections serve a vital role in education.

Photograph by Troy Fedderson, University of
Nebraska-Lincoln



For more information:
www.nscalliance.org