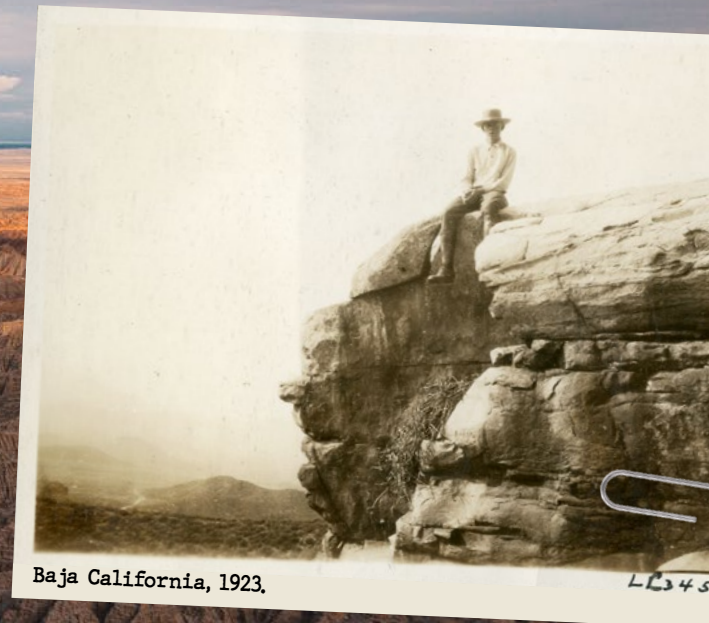


NATURE LOVERS, SINCE 1874

IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

the **nat**

SAN DIEGO
NATURAL HISTORY
MUSEUM



Baja California, 1923.

LC 345

DEAR MUSEUM FRIENDS,

We like to say that history is part of our name, but we live in the present and are always looking forward. Whether planning new exhibits, conducting field studies, leading hikes, teaching classes, implementing energy-saving measures, or caring for our collections, we aim for a better future for nature and people in our region.

As this report shows, we renewed our commitment to protecting nature's future with the hire of Dr. Michelle Thompson as our first ever conservation biologist. We increased the size of our BioServices staff, who work daily with land managers to ensure endangered species thrive, invasive species are detected and mitigated, and that development plans factor in the needs of nature. We improved conditions for storing our collections, safeguarding them for future needs. We broadened our reach in the community and connected people with nature where they were—be that on the open ocean, at local libraries, or in rural areas.

Preparing for our 150th anniversary next year has provided a great opportunity to explore our own history. It has been an absolute delight discovering the gems in our archives. Much has changed, and yet we still

remain true to our mission, and we honor our predecessors by continuing their work to study and preserve our region.

Our daily reality would be bewildering to early museum staff. We document species with smartphones and apps. Our digitized paleo collection allows anyone with a 3D printer to produce fossil replicas with the touch of a button. Our visitors come day and night, and some of the educational material can be found on beer cans by scanning a QR code.

Despite the trappings of modernity some of our activities would be familiar to those who came before us. We're still engaged in scientific discovery on both sides of the border, working with formally trained and community scientists. We're still amazing our visitors with engaging exhibits and public lectures. We're still taking people on guided hikes (though we've traded top hats and petticoats for baseball caps and hiking boots). Our 1930s-era nature cabinet program lives on through its modern-day equivalent, the Nature To You Loan Library. I believe the early staff would be proud of our big, beautiful building (with air conditioning!), our large and talented team, and our influence in the region.

At The Nat, past, present, and future are connected by the unrelenting dedication to our mission. No matter how much has changed in the world around us, we remain motivated to study and inspire a love for nature in our region, continue the important work of the museum, and strive to leave our organization better for those who will come after us.

Sincerely,



Judy Gradwohl

Christy Walton President and CEO



NATURE LOVERS, SINCE 1874



2

A LEGACY OF
LEADERSHIP



10

A LEGACY OF
DEVOTION



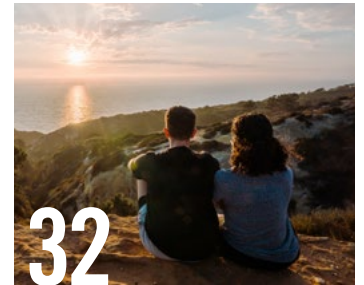
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A LEGACY OF
PERSEVERANCE



24

A LEGACY OF
INSPIRATION

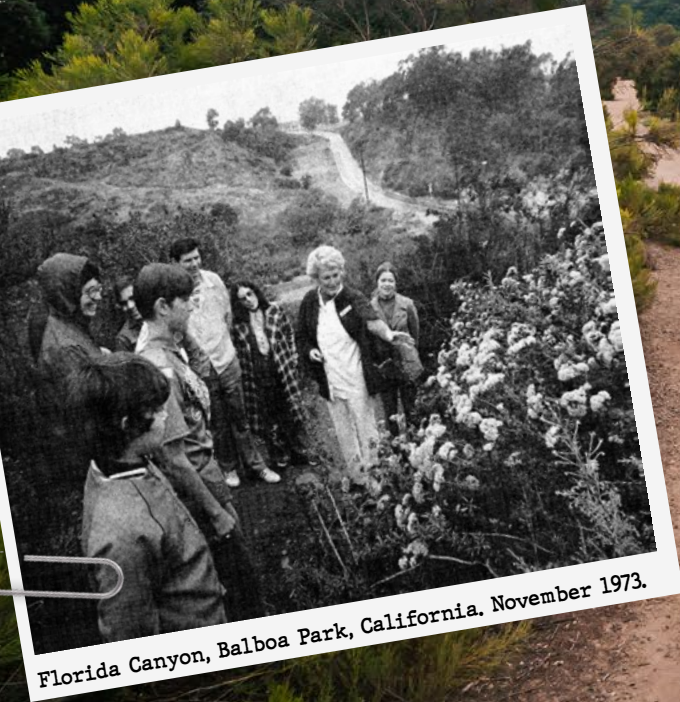


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A LEGACY OF
COMMUNITY

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

WE'RE NOT SAYING WE'RE KNOW-IT-ALLS. BUT WE ARE KNOW-A-LOTS.



Florida Canyon, Balboa Park, California. November 1973.

Dr. Michelle Thompson and Ana West from our Conservation Biology team measure out a survey transect in Tecolote Canyon.



Museum Collections Make Headlines in *Science*

A study published in the prestigious journal *Science* confirmed the work of natural history museums is becoming more critical than ever.

In a groundbreaking study, natural history museums around the world joined forces to assess and map their collective 1.1 billion specimens in storage—the first step of an ambitious plan to inventory the global collection. This unparalleled effort brought together 73 museums in 28 countries—including The Nat.

President and CEO Judy Gradwohl and former VP of Science & Conservation Dr. Michael Wall joined more than 150 international co-authors to make the case for improving collections care, digitization, and data access for all.

“When museums coordinate efforts and make collections more accessible, our individual collections add up to a greater whole. A global collection has the potential to guide decisions relevant to the future of biodiversity as we know it,” explained Judy.

The Nat has been collecting data about Southern California and the Baja California Peninsula for nearly 150 years, and we are proud to be included among the greatest natural history collections in the world.

Our collection is very much alive with information critical to the future of our region and human survival on the planet. Pictured here, a colony of giant barnacles (genus Megabalanus).

COLLECTIONS BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL NUMBER OF SPECIMENS:

~8.7 MILLION

SPECIMENS/OBJECTS ADDED TO COLLECTIONS THIS YEAR:

198,336

BIRDS

NEW SPECIMENS:

414

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

52,554

ENTOMOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS:

170,525

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

1,539,356

RESEARCH LIBRARY

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

117,000

MAMMALS

NEW SPECIMENS:

78

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

25,671

PALEONTOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS:

24,575

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

1,590,244

MARINE INVERTEBRATES

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

~5 MILLION

HERPETOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS:

87

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

76,830

BOTANY

NEW SPECIMENS:

2,657

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

284,922

MINERALOGY

TOTAL SPECIMENS:

~15,000



The New Face of Conservation

We're thrilled to welcome Dr. Michelle E. Thompson as our new—and first—Exequiel Ezcurra Director of Conservation Biology.

A Southern California native, Michelle most recently served as lead conservation ecologist for the Keller Science Action Center at The Field Museum in Chicago, where she conducted multidisciplinary collaborative conservation work in the Amazon.

This role is a newly created, endowed position made possible through philanthropic support from a group of anonymous donors and start-up funding from the JiJi Foundation. It is a key part of the museum's strategic plan to lead with its science and help preserve biodiversity.

Michelle will steer The Nat's conservation research strategy and transform our organization's ability to have direct conservation impacts in our binational region. For decades, our staff have been studying threatened species, documenting how our natural world is changing, and providing data that makes conservation possible. This new position takes our strategy one step further.

Michelle will work across science departments to create new opportunities for collaboration and innovation. She'll also help us take a more proactive stance on emerging issues, have a seat at the table in statewide policy, and apply our science to today's most pressing issues.

Gathering California red-legged frog eggs in Baja California and botanizing in Tijuana with collaborator Mariana Delgado is part of the job for Dr. Michelle Thompson.

Here (and Here, and Here) for Nature

The building is just one place we encourage a love for nature in our region. These pinpoints represent a tiny fraction of the places we connected with community over the past year as part of outreach efforts and educational programs.

1 SAN DIEGO COUNTY FAIR

This year, the San Diego County Fair focused on the wonders of nature, and we were all for it! Volunteers hosted a specimen-studded booth for visitors to learn about local wildlife and send custom San Diego postcards featuring our region's biodiversity.



2 VOLUNTEERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Education staff, Whalers, and Canyoneers brought science alive for 250 young minds at Barnard Mandarin Magnet Elementary School's science fair. Whaler volunteer Claudia Poquoc even sang a whale song for curious students!



3 WHALE WATCHING CRUISES

Our Whalers, museum-trained naturalists, point out whales and marine life to guests aboard City Cruises boat tours. They spotted 243 whales this winter and about 80 during the summer.





4 SPRING INTO STEAM WITH SAN DIEGO LIBRARIES

Our volunteers brought the prehistoric past to life with hands-on fossil activities at nine libraries throughout the county for the Spring into STEAM initiative. Kids got the chance to hold and explore real fossils and learned what it's like to work as a paleontologist.



5 STEM EXPO AT PETCO PARK

The Nat swung into action at Petco Park for the San Diego Festival of Science & Engineering. Educators hosted a booth focused on the wilderness in our backyards and how we can help with conservation in our own neighborhoods.



6 BARRIO LOGAN STEM AND ART EXPO

Volunteer Manager Sara Shah and our volunteers shared The Nat's mission with more than 1,500 participants at the Barrio Logan STEM and Art Expo. They showed off native specimens, talked about our unique ecosystems, and spoke with participants about personal wildlife encounters.

7 DOCENT SCHOOL VISIT

Docents visited schools to teach students about San Diego's ancient wildlife. At Willow Elementary, 4th graders journeyed back in time to learn about the dinosaurs that roamed our county and modeled the tectonic plate movement that shaped our local landscape.



8 OAKSTRAVAGANZA

Museum educators Lauren Marino Perez and Chelsea Jensen attended the Pala Band of Mission Indians' Oakstravaganza event. By sharing local insect displays with more than 200 youngsters, they sparked lively conversations about insect lifecycles. Of course—the tarantula hawk wasp was a major hit!

9 CANYONEER HIKE

The Canyoneers celebrated 50 years of leading free, guided hikes throughout the county. From coast to desert, these dedicated naturalists teach people about our wild spaces like no one else.



10 BORDER BIOBLITZ AT BORDER FIELD STATE PARK

Nat staff and partners taught enthusiastic volunteers how to use iNaturalist to document wildlife in Border Field State Park and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. This year's blitz totaled more than 7,500 observations!



We Mean Business for Border Biodiversity

While scientists are key players in the fight to protect wildlife within our borderlands, community members can work right alongside us. One such way is through the annual Border BioBlitz.

The Border BioBlitz is a public iNaturalist project organized by Next Generation Sonoran Desert Researchers and supported by organizations across multiple states. For this year's fifth annual blitz, The Nat provided several opportunities for people to get involved.

We hosted a free, virtual Nat Talk with four scientists from both sides of the border. They shared insights on how the border wall impacts wildlife and discussed the importance of binational collaboration and community participation in borderland science. In advance of the month-long blitz, Director of Conservation Biology Dr. Michelle Thompson and her colleague, Dr. Mariana Delgado Fernández of Baja California, Mexico, penned a bilingual blog about why a cross-border approach to conservation is crucial to the future of our region (read it at sdnat.org/blog).

Education staff also coordinated public events to document wildlife on both sides of the border. The observation data our community collected can be used in many ways—from researchers seeking to understand borderland ecology to environmentalists testifying in court—and may ultimately drive decisions by state and federal agencies.

Conservation is not one-dimensional. While scientists are key players in the fight to protect borderland species, the Border BioBlitz illuminated how our communities can take these matters into their own hands too.



Making Arroyo Toads Count

Conservation leadership takes many forms. Chasing toads in the middle of the night is one of the more unlikely ones. But for some endangered species, it's critical.

Toads are often the subject of negative stereotypes—mis-characterized as squat and warty—and sometimes their well-being is pushed to the bottom of the priority list compared to more charismatic species.

Our researchers in the Herpetology Department are changing the narrative.

The arroyo toad—listed as endangered nearly three decades ago—is a cute, irresistible amphibian whose trilling song fills the silence of the night with love and romance of a natural kind. Yet, we still don't have a strong understanding of the toad's conservation status. Especially in the part of its range extending southward into Baja California.

Together with our Mexican partners at the conservation organization Fauno, the Museum completed the first ever arroyo toad census for populations below the border. Supported by the JiJi Foundation, the binational team visited every known Mexican population, plus discovered a few new ones along the way.

The team concluded the species is resilient and persistent, yet vulnerable. It simply needs water. The team found the toad, but where the groundwater was pumped for crops and households, the toad was nowhere to be seen. The toad faces similar challenges here in California.

Managing the needs of the toad can now be addressed comprehensively. With population data and a threats analysis from Mexico, our researchers are completing its conservation story and elevating the discussion around the toad's recovery.

The arroyo toad thrives near water sources; a binational team completes the first ever arroyo toad census in Baja California.

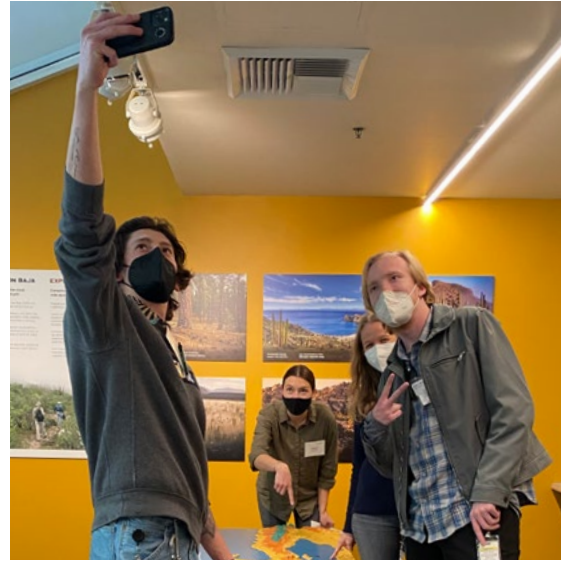
A LEGACY OF DEVOTION

FOR THE LOVE OF NATURE

Biologist Brenna Ogg maps plants in Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, San Diego County.



Imperial County, 1924.



Caring for our Crew

The Nat's most valuable asset is our staff—the 200+ individuals whose work advances our mission every day. Success is a collective effort and Museum leaders, with full support from our Board of Directors, orchestrated several initiatives to improve the work lives of our staff.

ESTABLISHING PAY BANDS.

Pay bands are designed to establish an equitable framework for compensation decisions. At the start of the fiscal year, we implemented a salary matrix that ensures compensation levels are on par with similarly sized local nonprofits.

PROVIDING COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS.

We established cost-of-living adjustments for staff who met a minimum length of service.

Between the pay bands project and the cost-of-living adjustments, 95% of all museum staff received a raise in compensation during the year.

INCREASING MINIMUM WAGE.

We increased The Nat's minimum wage for part-time staff and full-time staff. For full-time staff, the new rate is 23% over the required San Diego minimum wage.

INVESTING IN TRAINING.

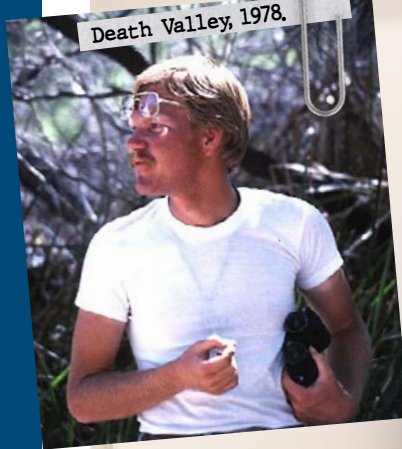
We supported staff across the Museum in pursuing professional development opportunities to improve their skills. Some people attended conferences and webinars, while others pursued certifications in their field. We also hosted in-person training programs at The Nat so staff could participate in cohort-based learning groups.

Our annual staff retreat brought together employees from all departments to participate in business discussions, breakout sessions, and teambuilding activities.

The 150 By 150 Challenge

We've set a legacy giving goal to grow our Live Oaks Society to 150 members before our 150th birthday in October 2024. Live Oaks Society members are individuals who have chosen to leave a gift to The Nat through an estate plan or beneficiary designation.

Like a live oak tree that continues to provide for its habitat after the end of its life cycle, these gifts leave a lasting impact on our organization. They ensure that The Nat's work—critical to our region—continues long into the future. We are already 75% of the way to our goal of 150 members, and over the next year we'll continue inspiring others to leave a legacy for nature. Learn more at sdnat.org/liveoaks.



Devotion to Science Goes Deep

Phil Unitt, our Curator of Birds and Mammals, celebrated his 35th anniversary with The Nat. Phil began birding at 11 years old when he borrowed a book about birds from his mother to see what he could find. Over the years, his hobby developed into a full-fledged passion for and career in ornithology.

Phil goes above and beyond as a dedicated caretaker to the Birds and Mammals collection, including making personal philanthropic contributions to the department to ensure all its needs are met.

In addition to providing for the department in its current state, Phil is looking ahead to its future. As a member of our Live Oaks Society, he will be leaving a legacy through an estate gift. After the loss of his mother and brother and having spent a very notable career at the Museum, Phil decided that leaving his estate to the Museum was an important statement and a way to “give back.” Future curators will surely be thanking Phil for his lasting generosity.

With more than three decades of service to The Nat, Phil Unitt continues to leave a lasting legacy as both a curator and a member of Live Oaks.

Fifty Years of Canyoneers

The Canyoneers celebrated their 50th year of guiding free hikes around San Diego County. We talked to two of them about the value of time spent in nature. Priscilla Dick, now retired from leading hikes, was among the first class of Canyoneers in 1973 while Samantha Barlin graduated from the Canyoneer class of 2022.



WHAT DOES HIKING DO FOR YOU? WHY BRING PEOPLE OUTDOORS?

Priscilla: Hiking satisfies something deep inside me, and it may sound selfish, but I wanted to introduce people to the idea that they too could experience what I was feeling when I was in nature.

Samantha: My dad taught me to appreciate the movement and fitness of hiking. My mom was always into learning about plants and animals. I'm a little of both. I also care deeply about our natural spaces, and I find that stories and storytelling are such an important way to connect people to them.

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN YOUR FELLOW CANYONEERS?

P: They are a wonderful cross section of people from such varied backgrounds, but we are all connected by the topic of nature. I liked that we could all sit around an owl pellet and marvel at its contents. I thought that was so great—here we are, a bunch of grown-ups curiously poking around at animal pellets.

S: We were the kids who got excited about cool rocks. We grew up, but we never lost that “look what I found!” mentality. We're a bunch of very curious people who love to be outside.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS OF CANYONEER HIKES?

P: I would like more emphasis on saving wild places. I'm afraid that San Diego will become nothing but dwellings and developed city blocks. I think education is the key to helping people understand how at risk our wild spaces are.

S: Our world is so bereft of free community spaces these days, so I want us to continue providing a space where mixed groups of people can interact for free. Older people are especially at risk of isolation and loneliness, and the Canyoneer hikes provide an opportunity for them to engage with younger generations and vice versa.

DO YOU HAVE ANY UNFORGETTABLE HIKING EXPERIENCES?

P: Every time I go out in nature, something unusual happens, no matter how small. On one hike this rattlesnake slowly followed our group down the dirt road for a good 10 minutes, perhaps defending its territory. It was quite a thrill. People were saying “My gosh this thing is persistent!”

S: On a recent pre-hike in Anza-Borrego, we saw nine bighorn sheep. That was pretty unforgettable. We ended up watching these sheep for like 20 minutes. It was so green from the rain, and they were just munching away. They didn't care about us at all.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL TRAIL?

P: There's a stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail near Lake Morena where I often see a breeding pair of indigo buntings. I love to go on that walk to see the birds, but I also like meeting the PCT thru-hikers from around the world and learning about their journeys.

S: I'll always have a fondness for Mission Trails because I grew up right next to that park. But I also really love the Los Peñasquitos Canyon. It's got riparian trees, scrublands, and a beautiful waterfall.

The Hidden Power of Our Volunteers

Every volunteer has their own superpower. Whether spinning stories about insects or sifting for microfossils, our volunteers bring their unique expertise to The Nat every day. Here are three volunteers whose backgrounds in the sciences elevate the work we do.



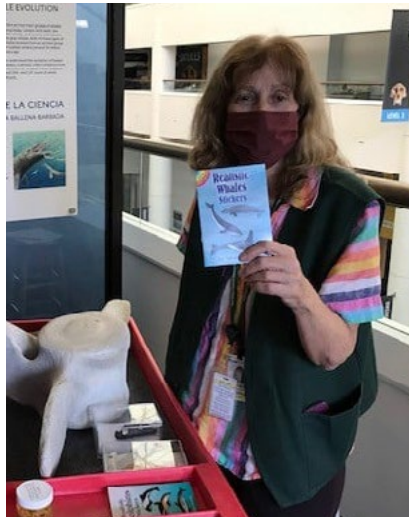
A FOSSIL LOVER FROM THE START

Paleontology volunteer Daniel Contreras Alvarez, hailing from Ensenada, Mexico, is part of a new generation of international volunteers. As a child, Daniel visited The Nat and was inspired to pursue paleontology by his encounter with our *Allosaurus*. Today, he is continuing to develop his professional skills as a paleontologist at the Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada.

In addition to his contributions in our lab, Daniel is paving the way for Spanish-speaking visitors to learn more about natural history and envision a career in the sciences. His interactions in Spanish with guests visiting our Paleo Prep Lab spark rich conversations about prehistoric life in our region. Daniel's story illuminates the best of what we do—inspiring a lifelong love for nature far beyond our walls.

GENETICIST INSPIRES NEXT GENERATION

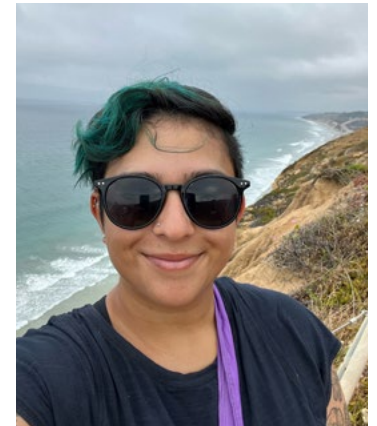
Docent Leona Chemnick brings her remarkable background as a genetic researcher at San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, whether she's leading school kids through *Fossil Mysteries* or running an interpretive cart in *Coast to Cactus*. Leona's long research career focused on using DNA to help save endangered and threatened species, such as Mongolian wild horses and orangutans. She shares unique stories from her work with guests and students, like how her team discovered California condors reproducing without a mate! She especially enjoys sharing new natural history stories with kids who are already familiar with our exhibits. Leona carries on the tradition of being a Nat Docent like her late mother, Hadarah Chemnick. Their work over two generations continues to inform and inspire the next generation of young scientists.



CRUISING FOR CONSERVATION

Museum Whaler Aly Velloze is a wildlife conservation biologist with a love for teaching the public about San Diego's biodiversity. She grew up here, cultivating a fascination for burrowing owls and vernal pools, which led her to a degree in environmental science from San Diego State University. Aly worked for Caltrans for nearly seven years in project impact analysis and restoration efforts, and recently transitioned to a role with California State Parks serving all of Southern California.

Aboard the City Cruises whale watching excursions, Aly can see the impact of live whale sightings on guests' perceptions of the environment. She emphasizes how critical it is for the public to experience nature firsthand, reinforcing how long-lasting memories (or "sticky memories" as we like to call them) are key to conservation efforts. Aly's experience as a biologist enriches her interpretation aboard whale watching cruises, sharing our crucial message of conservation with people miles off the coast.



Volunteer Milestones

Volunteers keep us running—they support our organization’s mission and help connect people to it. **Join us in honoring volunteers who have reached significant service milestones.**

50 YEARS+ Priscilla Dick

45 YEARS+ Sandi Rosenthal

40 YEARS Glenn Dunham

35 YEARS Diana Lindsay

25 YEARS

Albert Verna
John Keethler
Robert Gordon

20 YEARS

Christine Waters
Judith Carlstrom
Margaret Fillius
Nelson Brav

15 YEARS

John Hopper
Jill Crane
Lynda Osborn
Candra Scott

10 YEARS

Katrin Soldau
Devin Ratelle
Duane Trombly
James Varnell
Maggie Holloway
Mary Duffy

Melonie Brown
Teresa Varnell
Lynne Shevinsky
Marilyn Smith
Susan Emerson
Jim Clevenger

Kris Fleming
Laura Keener
Alin Maxon
Jan Newell
Scott Primack
Ken Shelby

Kaylyn Waisbrot
Richard Campbell
Michael Guberek

5 YEARS

Lauriel Adsit
Ashlyn Bahrychuk
Jane Barger
Nora Bodrian
Jose Bojorquez
Christie Campbell
Maya Carlin
Charles Clark
Michelle Cloud-Hughes
Mel Durand
Margaret Elizondo
Donald Endicott
Marie Estrada
Thomas Fazekas
Dave Fillion
Kelly Fuller
Blake Georgouses
Daniel Gerardi
Judy Gibson

Coral Gilbert
Sarah Gorman
Ekaterina Gracheva
Delores Griffin
Marcia Halpern
Jennifer Haslam
Sherry Hayes
Cheryl Hoech
Laurel Holloway
Jeff Huston
Miranda Hyldahl
Deborah Iannizzotto
Mary Ann Jacobs
Jenny Johnson
Bronwyn Jones-Mortell
Kristi Kass
Gale Kavanaugh
Katarina Keane
Paul Koenig

Veronica Lavarello
Sarah Laws
John Lynas
Nancy Jo Mackey
Karen Marchetti
Janet McClain
Stephanie Mood
Heather Morgereth
Jean Payne
Beverly Pecunia
Jason Pomerantz
Kyra Presnell
Grant Reeder
Karen Saunders
Stuart Schafer
Robert Seid
Robin Shifflet
Ann Sixtus
Carling Slawson

Marilyn Solan
Daryel Stager
Lyle Stotelmyre
Diosdada Tehan
Jamie Thompson
Gabriel Vogeli
Fran Wade
Vasti Walsh
Christina Ward
Simone Weinstein
Nichelle Wentz
Brianna Wetherbe
Carol Wicker
Dennis Wicker
Gregg Wilson
Marina Youngblood
Sohath-Zamira
Yusseff-Vanegas
Mahmood Zadeh

VOLUNTEERS BY THE NUMBERS

554 total volunteers

31,589 total volunteer hours

\$1,178,920 dollar value of volunteer hours
(in California in 2023 per Independent Sector)

CANYONEERS LED

56 public hikes for **1,822** people
10 school hikes for **331** students
and chaperones

DOCENTS REACHED

2,161 students and chaperones with
82 programs

WHALERS REACHED

11,716 passengers on **143** cruises

NATURALISTS

24 used interactive games and crafts
to engage guests at the Museum

SCIENCE VOLUNTEERS LOGGED

10,370 hours

A LEGACY OF PERSEVERANCE

PROTECTING NATURE SINCE 1874. AND WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED.



Our work takes place throughout the binational region, from the Baja California Peninsula to coastal San Diego, pictured here.



Nature hike, 1921.

Science for the Ages

An anyone working in research will tell you that science can take time. Nature has its own schedule. Change can take eons. And some studies improve over time. This is why we go to great lengths to care for our collections, and why we've been studying the same places for 150 years. This year, our attention to our region paid off in several ways.

NEVER TOO LATE FOR TURTLES

After being in our collection for 20 years, a fossil sea turtle shell finally made its grand debut in scientific literature. Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Ashley Poust, Paleontology Curator Dr. Tom Deméré, and their colleague from UC Berkeley published a study detailing the fossil's valuable place within the greater story of sea turtle existence.

Previously, there was a 40-million-year gap in the fossil record with no sea turtles known from most of the Pacific Ocean. The fossil shell fragment effectively split that gap in half.

"If big, easily recognizable animals like sea turtles can be 'hiding' in the fossil record of the North Pacific," Ashley says, "there may be other unexpected fossils yet to be discovered in San Diego County."

LATE BLOOMERS FEEDING BIRDS

Nat researchers Kevin Clark and Kim Ferree and their colleagues at the engineering firm WSP USA published a study that could help save the federally threatened California gnatcatcher. The study is based on fieldwork from 2016-17, though data synthesis, analysis, peer review, and publishing required another five years of work.

Fall is tough for California gnatcatchers. Tasty insects are fewer and far between. According to Kevin and Kim's study, gnatcatchers rely heavily on late-blooming native plants like coyote brush and California brickellbush, which attract insects during drier months. If these plants aren't around, the gnatcatchers might starve to death during the fall and winter.

Story continued on page 18



A boomerang-shaped fossil—part of a sea turtle shell—helped fill a gap in the fossil record; our team published a study about the relationship between late-blooming plants and the federally threatened California gnatcatcher.

Science for the Ages *continued from page 17*

These late bloomers are rarely included in the restoration of coastal sage scrub, and there is no guidebook on how to restore this unique habitat. This new study is changing that.

SNAKE SCIENCE STILL GOING STRONG

Our Museum has—by far—the largest rattlesnake collection in the world. We've been studying rattlesnakes in our region for almost 100 years, so one might think we've learned all there is to know about rattlers. But in 2022, a local enthusiast shared a unique find that helped Herpetology Curator Dr. Bradford Hollingsworth add a whole new species to our county's reptile list. For the first time ever, a western diamondback rattlesnake was documented just inside the northeast county lines. Even after all these years, the snakes are still surprising us.

THEN THERE WERE TWO

Last fall, Curator of Birds and Mammals Phil Unitt got an offer he couldn't refuse: one of North America's most elusive birds.

The small, downright gorgeous bird was a yellow rail. Found emaciated and dehydrated, she unfortunately died despite the best efforts of local rehabilitation center Project Wildlife. The bird was found near north Mission Bay and is only the second yellow rail ever recorded for San Diego County. The first record is also in our collection, added 24 years prior, in 1998.

Little is known about yellow rails in Southern California (or anywhere for that matter), but thanks to our research collection, the bird can have a second life as a scientific specimen. Give it enough time, and her little body may answer important conservation questions of the future.

Surprising finds: a western diamondback rattlesnake just inside our county lines; a yellow rail—only the second ever recorded for San Diego County.



Making Sense of Record Rainfall

Last spring more than a dozen atmospheric rivers showered our state with rain. Some spots in San Diego County—from Palomar to Ocotillo to Oceanside—received record-breaking rainfall. By March 2023, our county surpassed the annual precipitation of 2022.

But what did it mean for our wildlife and research?

Nothing benefits from moisture more than plants—especially in arid environments. “This rain allowed us to find more species in new places around the county,” says Curator of Botany Dr. Jon Rebman. “For diversity research, this weather is invaluable for rediscovering lost species and expanding species lists for protected lands.”

Jon and his team added 85 new plants to the species list for Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, one of the most heavily studied parks in the County. It’s not all sunshine and rainbows though; Jon says there were also “more invasive weeds than you can shake a stick at.”

Big weather also affects our record-keeping, mostly in the form of specimen acquisitions. According to Birds and Mammals Curator Phil Unitt, many birds are impacted by wet weather, such as red phalaropes which migrate over the

open ocean and are rarely seen inland unless they are blown in by storms and perish. Our collections also see spikes in acquisitions due to rapid population growth, while some animals are collected in completely new locations or different times of year than usual. A key value of keeping long-term records and collections is that we can compare and contextualize big weather events or detect subtle patterns and trends.

And we can’t forget the canyons. San Diego’s urban canyons—from Tecolote to Switzer to Chollas Creek—are vital during rainstorms. “Canyons help redirect, slow, and filter the water, as opposed to drainpipes dumping it straight into the ocean,” says Director of Conservation Biology Dr. Michelle Thompson. Once the rains take a break for summer, our canyons hold on to the moisture longer than urban or paved areas, providing temperature buffers and water sources for wildlife long into the dry season. Their continued function, Michelle says, depends on our willingness to protect them from degradation and development.

Whether you welcomed the wild weather or wished it would end, there’s one thing we can all agree on: the wildflowers were outstanding. “Even I was blown away by the aesthetics,” says Jon. “When every stem is in flower, it’s just beautiful.”



Waterfalls flow and flowers bloom after record-breaking spring rains. Wet weather helps scientists find new species and relocate rare species.



We Put the “Nat” in iNaturalist

We believe everyone can help build scientific knowledge, and we know that nature lovers in our region are a valuable source of help. We continued our tradition of working with community scientists to amplify the use of iNaturalist—or iNat for short. This website and mobile app allows anyone to document the natural world around them and serves as a global database of biodiversity.

We work to put scientific tools and knowledge into the hands of our community because local data collection is critical to understanding regional—even global—conservation issues. The payoff is twofold: scientists can better understand the conservation needs in our binational region and more neighbors can be supporters of nature and science.

Our staff members—and even their families—document and digitize biodiversity on a regular basis. Clockwise from top left: sand snake observation posted to iNaturalist; youngsters participate in a mushroom hike; Christana Mojica displays Lepidoptera specimens; Rachel Allingham documents a horned lizard for the Border BioBlitz.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Our Education Department led local efforts for two global projects: the City Nature Challenge and the Border BioBlitz (learn more about the latter on page 8). The City Nature Challenge is an annual world-wide competition among cities to collect the largest number of iNat observations during one weekend in spring. The Nat hosted 10 events with seven partner organizations for the Challenge. More than 1,000 San Diegans documented our county's amazing biodiversity with 4,326 observations. Worldwide, nearly 67,000 people made over 1.8 million observations of more than 57,000 species

KNOWLEDGE EXPANDED

Our Herpetology team added 4,049 sightings of 143 species to their Herp Atlas thanks to the iNat community. The Herp Atlas combines specimen data from our collection with iNat observations to paint a clearer picture of species distributions over time and space. Thanks to digital photography and this app, community scientists are helping us document our region's amphibian and reptile diversity at an unprecedented rate.

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR FUN(GI)

The Research Library hosted a mushroom foray with staff, volunteers, family, and friends. Prior to our outing at Blue Sky Ecological Reserve in Poway, 11 species had been documented in iNat. During our hike, the group found 19 different mushrooms, expanding the documented range of eight fungal species.

PERSONAL BESTS

Entomology's Rachel Allingham is an avid iNat user, and was in the top 20 observers for the Border BioBlitz. This year, she made 847 observations of 487 different species, and identified 583 observations made by others. "My favorite thing is to have my morning coffee and spend about half an hour identifying things for other people. It keeps my identification skills sharp and it's a fun puzzle to start the day," says Rachel.

Jon Rebman, our Curator of Botany, added a whopping 2,320 observations last year, documenting 1,249 species. He surpassed 600,000 lifetime iNaturalist identifications and positioned himself in the Top Five Identifiers in the world. This is in addition to the nine new taxa he described this year! No big deal.

BioServices' Kevin Clark had some fascinating finds as well. He documented a new location of the invasive African clawed frog and new locations for the rare western spadefoot toad. He also saw an extremely rare white-streaked *Saturnia* moth from the Cuyamaca Mountains (which has only five iNat records total!) and recorded an exhausted Allen's hummingbird on the ferry between Catalina Island and mainland California. The hummingbird sighting is particularly interesting because it is an island endemic subspecies that colonized the mainland a few decades ago, possibly through the same route—hitching a ride.

HISTORICAL DATA MEETS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Entomology Project Assistant Christiana Mojica is on the cutting edge of science, contributing to a new AI-powered field guide app for the project LepNet. Christiana submitted images of several hundred moth and butterfly species from our collection to FieldGuide.ai. "I provided some of the first and only images of certain species on the app, which learns by contribution," she says. The Entomology team also used the app to identify some of our own specimens.

NAT STAFF PUBLISHED 23 PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES THIS FISCAL YEAR. OUR ASSOCIATES PUBLISHED MORE THAN 130 ADDITIONAL PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES.

As an authority on nature in our region, we share our extensive knowledge with others through many outlets. Our staff and research associates have produced informative and innovative research since our founding, and we actively contribute to the scientific record.

This year, our team of experts advanced their respective fields of study by publishing papers on many topics, from species discovery to rattlesnake distribution, from hybrid chollas to fossil turtles, and everything in between.

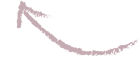
Their publications this year have already been referenced more than 1,200 times by other researchers.

Edited Citations: First, second, and Nat authors listed—all others omitted for brevity.

Bold indicates Museum staff and research associates.

JULY 1, 2022-JUNE 30, 2023 STAFF PUBLICATIONS

A new, hybrid cholla (cactus) is discovered.



Cylindronia, a New Nothogenus Representing the First Reported Hybrid Between *Grusonia* and *Cylindropuntia* (Cactaceae). M.A. Baker, L.C. Majure, ... **J.P. Rebman** *Haseltonia*.

The chronology of mysticete diversification (Mammalia, Cetacea, Mysticeti): Body size, morphological evolution and global change. M. Bisconti, L. Pellegrino, **G. Carnevale** *Earth-Science Reviews*.

The genus *Astragalus* (Leguminosae: Papilionoideae: Galegeae) in Mexico. E.E. Castillón, J.Á.V. Quintanilla, ... **J.P. Rebman** *Phytotaxa*.

Astragalus tijuanaensis and *Astragalus brauntonii* var. *lativexillum*, a new species and a new variety in the genus *Astragalus* (Fabaceae) from extreme northwestern Baja California, Mexico. E.E. Castillón, **J.P. Rebman**, ... J.Á.V. Quintanilla *Phytotaxa*.

Foraging preferences of the threatened coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica*) during the non-breeding season. **K.B. Clark, K. Ferree**, ... S.J. Myers *Journal of Field Ornithology*.

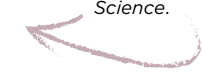
Two Western diamondback rattlesnakes collected in 1930 were likely the first confirmed records of the species in San Diego County. Yet the animal went undocumented in our county's checklists until this publication.



Comparative Study of Monitoring Protocols for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher, and Recommendations for Future Implementation at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Camp Pendleton, California. **K.L. Ferree, K.B. Clark**, K. Fischer. Unpublished report submitted to the Environmental Security Office, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, and Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest.

Geographic Distribution: *Crotalus atrox* (Western Diamondback Rattlesnake). **B.D. Hollingsworth**, T. Raszkowski *Herpetological Review*.

Museums around the world—including The Nat—joined forces to assess and map their collective 1.1 billion specimens in storage. This study confirmed the work of natural history museums is becoming more critical than ever. Read the full story on page 3.



A global approach for natural history museum collections. K.R. Johnson, I.F.P. Owens, **J. Gradwohl, M. Wall**, The Global Collections Group. *Science*.

A new species of *Eriogonum* (*Polygonaceae*) from the Cape region of the Baja California Peninsula, Mexico.
J.L. León de la Luz, **J.P. Rebman**, A. Medel Narváez
Revista Mexicana de Biodiversidad.

A new species of *Nama* (*Namaceae*) from the Vizcaino Desert, Mexico.
J.L.L. de la Luz, **J.P. Rebman**, A. Medel Narváez
Botanical Sciences.

How the past creates the present: Reviewing the foundational roles of colonialism and systemic racism and their modern manifestations in paleontology.
P. Monarrez, J.B. Zimmt, **A.W. Poust**, ... C.M. Thompson
American Geophysical Union, 2022 Conference Proceedings.

Phylogenetic analyses reveal bat communities in Northwestern Mexico harbor a high diversity of novel cryptic ectoparasite species.
L.A. Najera-Cortazar, T. Kitching, **D. Stokes**, ... S.J. Goodman
Ecology and Evolution.

Testing for Convergent Evolution in Baleen Whale Cochleae.
T. Park, **E.G. Ekdale**, R.A. Racicot, F.G. Marx
Convergent Evolution: Animal Form and Function (Chapter 4). Springer International Publishing.

Longevity in Wild California Red-legged Frogs (*Rana draytonii*) from Baja California, México.
A. Peralta-García, J.A. Alvarez, ...
B.D. Hollingsworth
Bulletin, Southern California Academy of Sciences.

An early nimravid from California and the rise of hypercarnivorous mammals after the middle Eocene climatic optimum.
A.W. Poust, P.Z. Barrett, S. Tomiya
Biology Letters.

An Eocene sea turtle from the eastern North Pacific fills a Paleogene gap.
A.W. Poust, P.A. Holroyd, **T.A. Deméré**
Acta Palaeontologica Polonica.

Vascular Flora of the Sky Islands in San Diego County, California.
J.P. Rebman
Volcan Mountain Symposium Proceedings.

Kallstroemia hageri (*Zygophyllaceae*), a new caltrop from Baja California, Mexico.
J.P. Rebman
Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas.

Documented chromosome number determinations in some *Physaria* species (*Brassicaceae*).
A.M. Salywon, **J.P. Rebman**, D.A. Dierig
Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas.

The Faunal Remains from the Prehistoric Site of Riverwalk (SDI-11767). In Riverwalk Redevelopment Project Phase I: Archaeological Data Recovery Results, City of San Diego, California.
A. Sasson
Report on File at South Coastal Information Center, San Diego State University.

Zooarchaeological Insights on San Diego County Inland-Coast Relations: An Arctic Sea Duck and Fish from Spring Valley, California.
A. Sasson, **P. Unitt**, **S. Arter**
Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly

Taxonomic identity of a recently naturalized *Senecio* species in California.
M.G. Simpson, R. Vanderhoff, ... **J.P. Rebman**, ... M. Koekemoer
Madroño.

Recent records of Anthony's Mexican mole, *Scapanus anthonyi*, from Sierra San Pedro Mártir, Baja California, Mexico.
J. Villarreal-Flores, A.A. Guevara-Carrizales, ...
S. Tremor
Western North American Naturalist.

Our paleo team filled in a 40-million-year "turtle gap" in the fossil record, suggesting Pacific sea turtles survived the mass extinction event of the late Cretaceous.

This new species was named after former president and CEO, Dr. Mick Hager.

An arctic sea duck bone found during an archaeology dig opens up new questions about our region's climate history and the opportunistic hunting of the Kumeyaay People.

SELECTED 2022-2023 RESEARCH ASSOCIATE PUBLICATIONS

Confirmation of the presence of the Striped Lizard Eater, *Mastigodryas dorsalis* (Bocourt, 1890) (*Squamata, Colubridae*), in Mexico.
J. A. Hidalgo-García, R. Luna-Reyes, **A.G. Clause**, ... L.A. Muñoz-Alonso
Check List: The Journal of Biodiversity Data

La formación de los nombres científicos en las especies de reptiles Mexicanos: Patrones recientes e ideas para el futuro.
R. Luna-Reyes, **A.G. Clause**, A. Nieto-Montes de Oca
LUM.

Applying stochastic and Bayesian integral projection modeling to amphibian population viability analysis.
A.F. Messerman, **A.G. Clause**, ... C.A. Searcy
Ecological Applications.

Survival vs. reproduction: Dimorphic life history strategy in Heermann's gulls during warm ocean temperature anomalies.
G. de la Cruz-Pino, E. Velarde, ... **E. Ezcurra**
Marine Ecology Progress Series.

Hybrid zones of *Natrix helvetica* and *N. natrix*: Phenotype data from iNaturalist and genetics reveal concordant clines and the value of species-diagnostic morphological traits.
U. Fritz, **L.L. Grismer**, M. Asztalos.
Vertebrate Zoology.

Environment of Whale-Bearing Sedimentary Succession from the Lower Pliocene of Tuscany (Italy): Insights from Palaeomagnetism, Calcareous Microfossils and Facies Analyses.
M. Marini, L.M. Foresi, ... **M. Bisconti**, I. Martini
Journal of Marine Science and Engineering.

The team identified the earliest baleen whale in the Mediterranean, which appeared after normal salinity conditions were re-established in the Early Pliocene.

Adam Clause was a publishing powerhouse, with three papers last year alone. He now serves as our new Herpetology Collections Manager.

As ocean temperatures rise, "bolder" Heermann's gulls may have a competitive advantage that might help mitigate the impacts of ocean warming on future populations.

Using photographic records—including those from iNaturalist—the authors differentiate between two similar species of grass snake.

A LEGACY OF INSPIRATION

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

NATURE
LOVERS:
THIS IS YOUR
HEADQUARTERS

EVERYTHING
FROM WEIRD
TO WONDERFUL
TO WHOA

NATURE IS MEANT
TO BE SHARED.



San Diego Natural History Museum, 1980s.

Oh Snap! *Caught on Camera* Gets the Community Involved

This year, a new photo exhibition debuted on the fourth floor. *Caught on Camera* showcases images of local wildlife taken with motion-activated cameras (or camera traps), revealing the secret lives of animals around us.

Many photos were taken by our scientists during fieldwork. Others were taken by professional photographers. But the real magic came from our community, who shared over 400 photos from their own backyards. From rats to ringtails, bobcats to bear cubs, we were delighted by the enthusiasm San Diego has for our wildest neighbors.

Visitors also played a role in selecting photos. While designing the show, the Exhibits team asked guests which images they found most intriguing. The results? Bats mid-swoop, mountain lions sharing a drink, and a bathing owl baring its legs (who knew they have fabulous gams under all those feathers?).

Our exhibits are merely a starting point for exploration. The community dove even deeper into the world of camera traps through an entertaining Nat Talk from mammalogist Scott Tremor, a nature photography workshop, and timely public discourse about urban wildlife following the death of LA's beloved mountain lion, P-22.

San Diegans showed their enthusiasm for local wildlife by submitting their own camera trap photos. Left to right: Striped skunks (Mephitis mephitis) by USGS, Cooper's hawk (Accipiter cooperii) by Jonathan Graehl, Bobcat (Lynx rufus) by John Boland



ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

OVERALL VISITATION _____
353,811

MUSEUMS FOR ALL _____
11,522

MUSEUM ACCESS FUNDS _____
4,072 students from Title 1
schools served

IN-MUSEUM SCHOOL
PROGRAMS _____
300 programs reaching
11,114 people

FAMILY & PUBLIC PROGRAMS—
IN MUSEUM
30 programs serving
2,687 participants

VIRTUAL
4 programs serving
1,152 participants

HYBRID
3 programs serving
480 participants

NATURE TO YOU
LOAN LIBRARY _____
507 loans reaching
144,566 people

WEBSITE _____
1,299,639 visits

ENEWS _____
59,992 subscribers

SOCIAL MEDIA
FACEBOOK _____
48,203 followers

TWITTER
10,617 followers

INSTAGRAM
13,064 followers

TIKTOK
220 followers

YOUTUBE
1,450 subscribers





Nat After Dark: A Place to Celebrate

Late nights, rooftop views, costumes, and film screenings: The Nat is becoming quite an after-work hangout spot with many new ways to enjoy natural history!

Over the summer, we extended our regular weeknight hours to 7 PM—with half-price admission after 5 PM—to give people more opportunities to access the Museum. Additionally, our Nat at Night program grew in popularity. On Friday nights, guests enjoyed the Museum until 10 PM, with after-hours exhibits, rooftop seating, specialty cocktails, and small plates from the restaurant Wolf in the Woods. These amenities and programs, like trivia and specimen drawing with SketchParty San Diego, engaged new audiences of all ages, and attracted thousands of after-hour visitors.

After a pandemic hiatus, the Secret Society of Adultologists roared back to life in October 2022 with more than 900 attendees. The spooky-themed night featured hands-on

paleontology, live music and dancing, behind-the-scenes tours, craft beers and cocktails, art tables, and costume contests. The event gives our over-21 crowd a whole new way to enjoy the Museum.

Nat Talks also created a buzz for the evening visitors. One highlight was the premiere of the nationwide PBS series *Human Footprint*, which packed the house. After an episode screening, guests participated in a panel discussion featuring film producers from Day's Edge and hip-hop legend Adrian Younge who composed the series' soundtrack.

In addition to public events, we hosted more than 100 private celebrations—corporate parties, industry galas, weddings, and more. To top it all off, popular wedding planning website The Knot named us one of 2022's "Best in Weddings." Clearly, people are loving their late nights at The Nat.



After-hours events continued to engage and connect our community. Guests enjoyed beautiful rooftop sunsets and sketching in the galleries with SketchParty San Diego.



Inspiration in Progress

For nearly 150 years The Nat has been instrumental in conserving San Diego's ever-evolving landscape. Now as the organization gears up for its 150th anniversary, we're offering new ways for visitors to experience wonder—inside and out.

DIGGING DEEPER

Inside the Museum's basement, The Nat's construction team completed demolition for the new Tom Deméré Paleontology Center and collections exhibition set to debut in 2025. This renovated space will ensure space for our ever-growing collection while giving visitors a behind-the-scenes look at museum research. The demolition crew and paleontology staff who monitored the basement construction got a big surprise: the discovery of small shell fossils that were buried in the earth more than 3 million years ago!

As we prepare to move paleontological specimens from our off-site warehouse back into the Museum, we've also been working to find good

homes for retired specimens. So far, we have rehomed a polar bear to a forensics lab hosted by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, donated taxidermy to other educational institutions, and relocated furniture and cabinetry to university collections.

INTERIOR DESIGN

The first floor Atrium is also getting a refresh to set the tone for stellar visits and encourage community gathering. Exhibits staff painted the pillars and walls, added wildlife graphics to our north entrance (have you met our Welcome Weasel yet?), and installed the second iteration of the *Art of Science* exhibition co-hosted with UC San Diego. Other planned improvements include updated seating, a floor-to-ceiling mural immersing visitors in our local biodiversity, and more.

PLANTING SEEDS

Outside the Museum walls, change is also in motion. Our new, interpretive native plant garden is set to open in spring 2024, with groundbreaking on the project scheduled for

early winter 2023. Staff completed hand-drawn illustrations and bilingual scripting for the garden signage. We're working with partner Forever Balboa Park to establish a new Nat Garden Volunteer Corps that will provide ongoing plant care and live interpretation.

GROWING THE FUTURE

As the garden plans bloom, we are also planning an outdoor education program in Balboa Park, fully funded by the California Cultural and Historical Endowment. This program, which will be offered to 5th graders from the San Diego Unified School District in the 2024-25 school year, will be developed by advisors, evaluators, and our new nature education manager.

Our team is busily working behind the scenes and in the warehouse to prepare new experiences that will inspire visitors inside and outside the Museum.

63% EARNED REVENUE

\$8.0 MILLION

PALEOSERVICES & BIOSERVICES

\$3.0 million

ADMISSIONS

\$2.8 million

MEMBERSHIP

\$290K

FACILITY RENTAL FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

\$812K

FOOD & BEVERAGE

\$715K

EDUCATION

\$150K

OTHER

\$249K



37% CONTRIBUTED REVENUE

\$4.8 MILLION

CURRENT USE GIFTS

\$3.0 million

GRANTS

\$805K

ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION

\$1 million

47% VISITOR EXPERIENCE

\$6.8 MILLION



12% MANAGEMENT & GENERAL

\$1.7 MILLION

33% SCIENCE & RESEARCH

\$4.8 MILLION

8% FUNDRAISING

\$1.1 MILLION

Financial Overview

Bolstered by a return to full Museum operations, The Nat ended the fiscal year with operating revenue and expense results exceeding pre-pandemic levels and generating an operating surplus of \$85,000, before depreciation. Operating revenues across earned and philanthropic sources rebounded significantly from the prior year, improving a combined 32% to total \$12.8 million, while operating expenses grew more modestly at 20%. In an effort to continually green operations, we reduced our energy usage by nearly 25% through a series of lighting and HVAC upgrades.

OPERATING REVENUE

Revenues from our diversified earned revenue portfolio increased by \$2.2 million, or 40%, to \$8 million. More than 300,000 guests walked through the Museum's doors during the fiscal year, a 45% increase over the prior year but still 5% below pre-pandemic levels. Further, we hosted more than 100 external events, contributing to a two-fold increase in facility rental income and a three-fold increase in food and beverage sales. The voices of students filled the halls year-round as education programs

ramped back up, nearly doubling their annual revenues. PaleoServices and BioServices—our conservation consultancies—generated nearly 1/4 of all operating revenue and climbed 13% year over year.

Revenues from the annual fund grew by \$800,000, or 20%, to \$4.8 million. Current use gifts improved by 12% and grants increased by 65%. Strong market conditions and the vesting of contributions led to 20% growth in the annual endowment distribution, surpassing the \$1 million mark for the first time in the Museum’s history.

OPERATING EXPENSE

Operating expenses increased by \$2.4 million, or 20%, to \$14.4 million. Nearly 60% of the growth came in the form of compensation (i.e., wages and benefits) as new staff were hired to support the reinstatement of museum operations. Retaining and recruiting staff continues to be a priority, and we increased the minimum wage of full-time staff to \$20/hour and offered cost-of-living increases. Staff compensation continued to be the largest area of financial investment for the Museum at \$8.1 million or 2/3 of all operating expenses. Greater than 80% of expenditures

made were in programmatic areas—Visitor Experience and Science and Research—totaling \$11.6 million.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Currently in the silent phase, the 150th anniversary capital campaign raised more than \$15 million during the year for endowment and capital projects. The largest project—a remodel of the lower level into a paleontology center—kicked off in the spring. The new paleontology collection space and fossil preparation lab will be complete in early 2024, and the adjacent public exhibit space will be complete in 2025.

BALANCE SHEET

With large contributions towards the endowment and capital projects, the Museum’s balance sheet continues to be healthy. In advance of planned capital expenditures, payments on pledges boosted the cash position by more than \$4 million to \$11.1 million. Favorable market conditions contributed to \$1.9 million and \$1.3 million dollar increases in the endowment and beneficial interest in charitable remainder trusts, respectively. Fixed asset values decreased by \$1.3 million overall

as depreciation exceeded additions for the fiscal year, a trend that will reverse as capital spending accelerates in fiscal year 2024. Liabilities continue to remain minimal and short-term at \$2.4 million, yielding a current ratio of 10.5 and a leverage ratio of just 3%.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Nat is committed to living its mission by continually greening its operations and reducing its carbon footprint. Through a number of measures—installing energy efficient lighting, upgrading HVAC equipment, and individual actions like turning off lights—electricity usage has decreased 25% year-over-year for the last half of the fiscal year. Plans are in place to replace aged and inefficient HVAC equipment and complete the transition to LED lighting. Furthermore, through internal efforts to promote sustainable commuting choices, The Nat earned SANDAG’s highest level of recognition: the Platinum Tier Diamond Award.

Additional details of The Nat’s financial health can be found in the audited financial statements posted on our website.

A LEGACY OF COMMUNITY



Whale bone discovery, 1922.

LOVE NATURE. LOVE THE NAT.

*Lots to love: watching the sunset at
Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve.*

THANK YOU

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023

We are deeply grateful to the many donors who supported the Museum this year through new gifts and pledge payments.

\$100,000 AND ABOVE

Anonymous
Alumbra Innovations Foundation
Steve & Susan Bell Fund of the Northern Trust Charitable Giving Program of the Chicago Community Foundation
City of San Diego
Ms. Dale H. Clark
Tracy and John Downing
Downing Family Foundation
The Carol and Henry F. Hunte Fund at Fidelity Charitable
Estate of Eric C. Koch
The Eleanor and Jerome Navarra Foundation 🌱
Price Philanthropies
The Iris Sage Fund at Schwab Charitable, in memory of Mary and Dallas Clark
San Diego Foundation
J. W. Sefton Foundation
State of California
Dr. and Mrs. Henk van der Werff
Mrs. Christy Walton
Dennis and Carol Wilson

\$50,000-\$99,999

Anonymous (4)
Americas Foundation
Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation
California Institute for Biodiversity
The Hervey Family Fund 🌱
Hervey Family Non-endowment Fund 🌱
Institute of Museum and Library Services
National Science Foundation
The Family of Chrysa Mineo and Mark Stephenson

\$10,000-\$49,999

An Anonymous Fund 🌱
Patrick Abbott, Ph.D.

Mrs. Mona Baumgartel and Mr. John DeBeer
Ms. Janie DeCelles
Janet and James* Dort
Mr. H. Glenn Dunham
Dr. Bernard J. Eggertsen
The Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund 🌱
Judy Gradwohl
Robert & Helen E. Grant Foundation
Heller Foundation of San Diego
Diana Herron
KPBS **
The Gilbert J. Martin Foundation
Nordson Corporation Foundation
Patrons of the Prado
Valerie Quate and Jim Myers
ResMed
Mr. and Mrs. Bryce Rhodes
The Rice Family Foundation
Nancy J. Robertson
San Diego Gas & Electric 🌱
Subaru of America **
Ms. Anne Schwartz
Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation
Mr. Philip Unitt
WWW Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

Carol Baird and Alan Harper at Schwab Charitable
Ms. Millie Basden and Dr. Peter Thomas
Karen Berger
The Beyster Family Foundation Fund IV 🌱
Mrs. Betty Beyster
The J.F. Beyster Fund 🌱
Jim Beyster
Vicki and Thomas Blackman
Martha Blake-Jacobson and Gary Jacobson
Ms. Laura Bond and Mr. Patrick Sewall

Ms. Anita Busquets and Dr. William A. Ladd
William A. Ladd and Anita I. Busquets
Charitable Fund at Schwab Charitable
Ms. Bárbara Córcega and Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra
Mary Dawe
Elaine Dodge and Martin Staubus
Staubus-Dodge Family Fund at the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation
Samuel I. & John Henry Fox Foundation
Ms. Debbie Fritsch and Mr. Pat Boyce
Kathryn and Andrew Garman
Michelle and Ron Hebdon
Hervey Charitable Fund at Schwab Charitable, in memory of James (Jim) Jessop Hervey
Hologic Charitable Fund 🌱
James Hervey Johnson Charitable Educational Trust
Ms. Conny Jamison
Silke Laqua and Jason Shidler
Dawn Lawson and John La Grange
Dr. Ellen Lehman and Dr. Charles Kennel
Alan G. Lehman and Jane A. Lehman Foundation
Peter MacCracken
Drs. Anne and Andy McCammon
Dr. Ann McGowan-Tuskes and Dr. Paul Tuskes
Dr. Rebecca Papendick and Dr. Jay Savage
Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Price
SBC Fund at the American Endowment Foundation in memory of Suzanne Bond, recommended by Laura Bond and Patrick Sewall
Jeff and Marie Scott
Strauss Family Foundation
Ms. Deborah Szekely
The Szekely Family Foundation

\$2,500-\$4,999

Paul Bechtner Fund, on behalf of Helen and Webster Kinnaird
The M.A. Beyster Fund II 🌱
Mary Ann Beyster
The Jeffrey Block and Michele Gerus Giving Fund at Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Anne and Gregory Bullard
Dinah and Scott Carl
Mimi and Charles Clark
Maryruth and Charles Cox
Ms. Donna Damson
Downtown San Diego Lions Club
Jennifer and Burke Fisher
Mr. Tom Fleming
Mary Limoges and Jack Heilbron
The Heilbron/Limoges Giving Fund at Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Ms. Allison Henderson and Dr. Jay Miles
Georganne and Michael Hoctor
Helen and Webster Kinnaird
Anneli Kyner and Tim Stahl
Ms. Ann Laddon and Dr. Adrian Jaffer
Jaffer Laddon Family Giving Fund at Schwab Charitable
Carolyn and Michael Lee
Ms. Barbara J. Lohne
Christopher Menkov
Elizabeth* and Louis Meyer
Mr. Louis Meyer
Jean and Bill O'Daniel
Melinda Owens and Corin Anderson
Arthur P. and Jeanette G. Pratt Memorial Fund
The Carla and Rudolph Rehm Fund at Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Renaissance Charitable Fund at Commonwealth Charitable Fund; In memory of Elizabeth B. Meyer

James and Danae Riley
Mr. Richard C. Schwenkmeyer
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\$1,000-\$2,499

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PRACTICING WHAT WE PREACH

Despite extended operating hours this past June and July, our electricity usage was down more than 25% from the same period last year. This wonderful news might not surprise our facilities staff, who have been working hard to reduce our carbon footprint.

During the last two years, the Exhibits Department has helped Facilities Technician Hector Lopez replace hundreds of light fixtures in our galleries with LED lights. Not only is this more visually pleasing, but switching to LEDs was clearly a big energy saver!

The Facilities team has been finding other ways to save energy, such as replacing multiple variable fan drives, insulating air handlers, replacing exterior temperature readers, replacing HVAC filters quarterly, fine-tuning HVAC controls, and adjusting lighting schedules. Decreasing our energy use reduces our energy bills and brings us closer to our mission by improving the Museum's carbon footprint and setting an example for sustainability.

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The Museum was awarded a four-star rating by Charity Navigator and a gold seal of transparency by Candid (formerly known as GuideStar), two of the most trusted nonprofit evaluators in the industry. These ratings speak to the merits of The Nat's financial health, accountability, and transparency and underscore our commitment to our donors.

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The following individuals represent members, donors, and volunteers who have passed away this fiscal year. We are thankful for their commitment to the Museum and wish to honor their memories.

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COMMUNITY SCIENCE

We were recently highlighted on a list of influential organizations moving from using the term “citizen science” and toward the more inclusive “community science,” helping us all make the field open to everyone.

Live Oaks Society

The Live Oaks Society is comprised of supporters who have made gifts to the Museum through their estate plans.

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PARK PLACE

This year, we hosted Mayor Todd Gloria's inaugural State of Balboa Park address, attended by 300+ civic leaders. The Mayor highlighted city-funded improvements to the Park's buildings and green spaces as part of his administration's push to invest in the revitalization of the "Jewel of San Diego."

Mayor Gloria also created a spin on the traditional "Key to the City" with a companion "Key to Balboa Park" presented to our Museum friend Betty Peabody. The longtime community trailblazer was also recognized by President and CEO Judy Gradwohl, who previewed our 2024 gardens project in which we will honor Betty and her late husband, Homer Peabody.

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Field Technician Jessica Barba assists with a California red-legged frog relocation in Santa Ysabel.



Laguna Mountains, 1922.

A 456

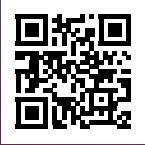
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Agua Caliente, 1924.