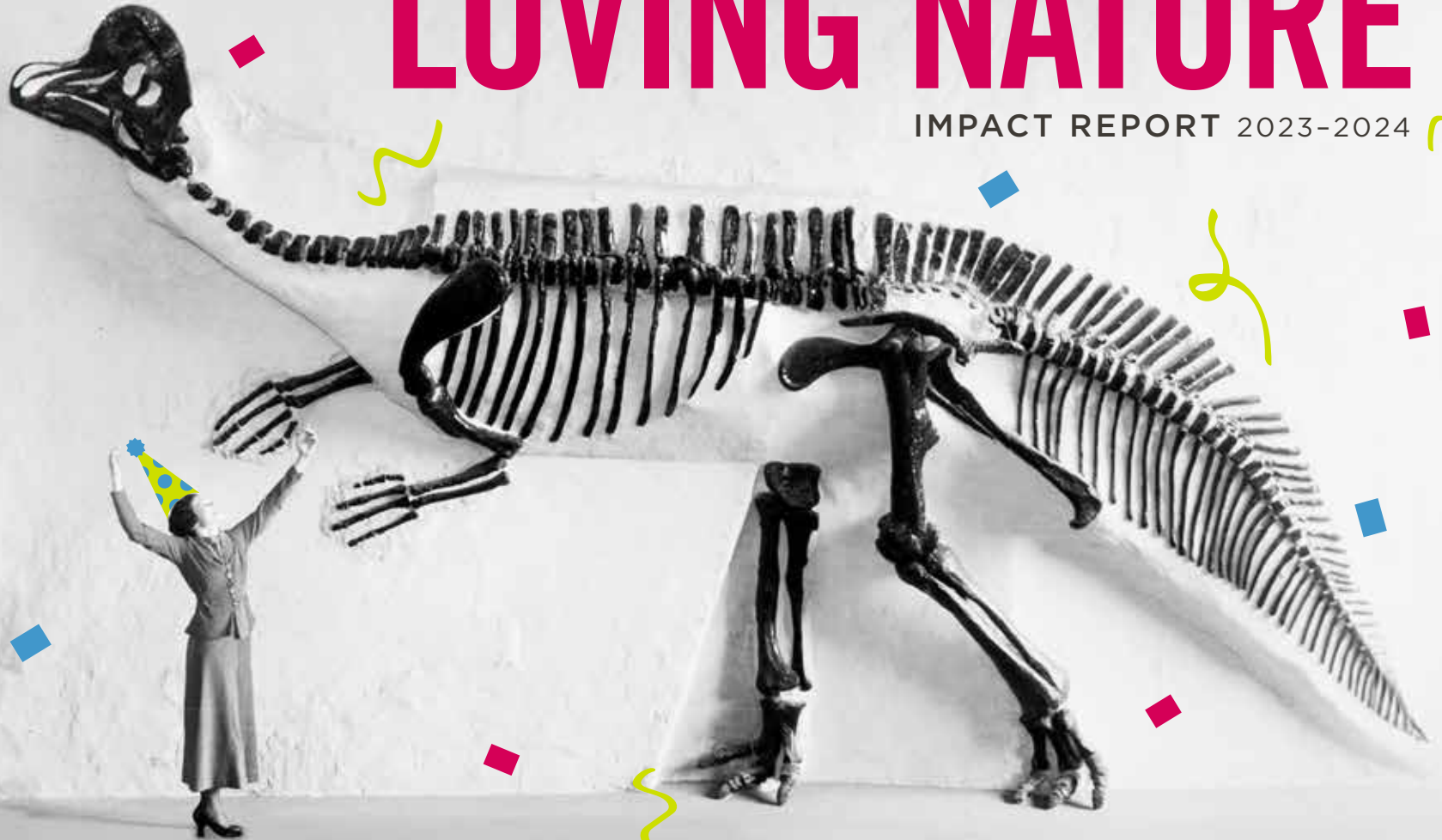


150 YEARS OF LOVING NATURE

IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024



150

SAN DIEGO
NATURAL HISTORY
MUSEUM



DEAR MUSEUM FRIENDS,

One of the most satisfying moments of working in a museum is that first walk through a completed space that started as a sketch on the back of an envelope or a hallway conversation. Ideas and dreams truly do come true, and at The Nat, they often exceed expectations. From the reinvigorated Atrium to the Tom Deméré Paleontology Center to the new outdoor garden, this anniversary year unfolded with one fantastic new experience after another.

Visitors approaching the Museum from any direction first meet us through the Nature Trail gardens. Even in their infancy, these gardens are bursting with color, highlighting the benefits of planting native, and welcoming fifth graders as part of a new outdoor education program.

Once inside, the building sparkles—from the gorgeous new mural and whimsical seating in the Atrium up to the new fourth floor exhibit Action from the Archives. Continue below grade and visitors discover the brand-new Paleontology Center featuring a collections walk-through experience and an upgraded prep lab with the same friendly faces. They can also watch a new exhibition come to life; our yet-to-be-named collections exhibition will be completed in full public view over the next few months.

Like any museum nerd, I'm also proud of the behind-the-scenes accomplishments. We've implemented energy-saving measures, replaced elevators, created a multi-year plan for replacing infrastructure before it fails, welcomed new

external partners for our new store and cafe, and developed a new signature film for our giant screen theater.

Nat staff were also active across our study region and the state. We launched the Healthy Canyons Initiative and the California Urban Nature Alliance to highlight the importance of nature in our state's major metropolitan areas. Our scientists continue to work in the field on both sides of the border, consulting daily with land managers on conservation priorities—all while continuing to publish scientific studies to benefit our region's nature.

Our 150th anniversary is more than an opportunity to celebrate how far we've come—we want to devote it to thinking ahead. We've spent much of the year building a new strategy based upon our history, collections, and expertise to improve life in our region for people and wildlife. It addresses our responsibilities as a scientific organization and as educators and defines our role in helping nature thrive in a changing world.

This year saw the culmination of years of planning and the beginning of many new experiences, activities, and opportunities to ensure a better future for nature and people in our unparalleled binational region.

Sincerely,

Judy Gradwohl

Christy Walton President and CEO



4

150 YEARS OLD
AND WE'RE JUST
GETTING STARTED



8

HELPING NATURE
LIVE LARGE



18

FOR THE LOVE
OF NATURE



24

NATURE IS MEANT
TO BE SHARED



34

YOUR LOVE OF
NATURE LIVES ON

In Our Conservation Era

Never in our history has it been so important to think about the future.

How does a 150-year-old institution leverage its history, reputation, and experience to make our region a better place in the face of today's most pressing issues? That is the question we asked ourselves during this pivotal year.

We've accomplished A LOT in a century and a half, and we've seen a tremendous amount of change in our region. Active stewardship of nature in San Diego and Baja California is more important than ever in the face of climate change and other human-induced impacts.

Not wanting to rest on our anniversary laurels, we dedicated our 150th year to setting the stage for the future. The goal? Develop and adopt a strategic framework that advances The Nat's role and impact, builds on its differentiating strengths, and establishes priorities for how we deploy our resources.

Nine months, 40 interviews with 100 people, and multiple planning discussions later, we have a new strategic framework that outlines our desired impact, role, and strategic focus for the coming years.



Our region can be a nationwide or even global model for conserving biodiversity. The Nat will be a catalyst for action, and we know that this starts with inspiring an appreciation of nature. We'll achieve our goals by focusing on three key areas: public engagement, conservation science, and partnerships.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: We will engage everyone in our work and become a more prominent voice for regional conservation and protection.

We're building from a strong foundation. The Nature Trail invites school groups and Park visitors to experience the benefits of native and drought-tolerant plants. Hiking, whale watching, community science events, and exhibits introduce people to the marvels of the natural world.

Moving forward, we'll expand outreach and programs to include new and larger audiences. Our exhibits and programs will include calls-to-action that inspire advocacy for biodiversity. The next phase of our Healthy Canyons project will encourage neighborhood leaders to protect and restore biodiversity.

By working in partnership with the region's diverse residents, we believe everyone will appreciate the natural world more deeply—and people who value the natural world will be more motivated to conserve it.

CONSERVATION SCIENCE: We will expand our capacity for engaging in and supporting science that informs conservation.

We're already working across the region every day to monitor the health of endangered plants and animals. Our research collections document the past 150 years of biological diversity and

provide a baseline for detecting change over time. In fact, our Baja California plant data has formed the basis of a plant inventory that was recently recognized by the state's environmental agency (see story on page 20). Even our endowment investments are well positioned to support our new strategy through funds that align with our values.

But we're not stopping there. We will apply our science to conservation action. We hope to increase our capacity for conservation biology; employ new technologies like remote sensing and machine learning to expand our ability to monitor biodiversity; and increase our capacity to mine our collections data, share it more broadly, and apply it to the region's greatest environmental challenges.

PARTNERSHIPS: We will develop new capacity and expertise to work effectively in partnership.

We're proud to be part of a much bigger ecosystem of people working to make our world a better place. Given the size and scope of issues our region faces, we need to work in partnership if we hope to have a positive impact.

This is not a new concept—we work with schools, research institutions, other nonprofits, and community partners all over the region. We've stepped up to serve as a convener

on many initiatives like the annual State of Biodiversity Symposium or last year's regional Biodiversity Conservation Summit.

Looking ahead, our partnerships will take many forms. In some cases, we will lead initiatives. And other times we'll play a critical support role. We'll also ramp up efforts to serve as a convener—hosting planning meetings and discussions. The desire for us to serve in this role was made clear during the planning stages of the Healthy Canyons initiative several years ago, and we're ready to answer that call.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Each of these areas builds on who The Nat is today. At the same time, they drive the organization's long-term transformation to play a more active role in empowering people to learn about, value, and conserve our region's nature.

While we are still defining—and refining—the specifics behind our role in helping nature and people thrive, we are off to a great start and excited to see what our future holds.

OUR ROLE: To catalyze action in order to conserve nature in our biodiverse region.

OUR IMPACT: Our region will be an inspirational model for valuing nature and conserving biodiversity.

Curator of Birds and Mammals Phil Unitt documents bird diversity in chaparral habitat in San Diego's urban canyons—one of the Museum's many conservation projects taking place in Southern California and the Baja California Peninsula.

Here for Nature. Here for the Future.

We have been a champion for the environment since day one, but our work is far from over. The next two decades will be the most critical time for nature in our region. This timing, coupled with the occasion of our 150th anniversary, has prompted the *Here for Nature* Capital Campaign.

This Campaign helps set us up for success for the next 150 years. Far more than a typical building campaign, it's about pushing forward with big, bold ideas and taking a more active role in stewarding our natural world.

We're launching major projects that focus on preserving the health of our local canyons and partnering with organizations across the state to advocate for urban nature—made possible in part through the creation of a Conservation Biology department. Collections and the people who care for them are being prioritized through endowments, energy-efficient upgrades, and interns and post-doctoral researchers to engage and train the next generation of scientists. In the Museum, the Campaign is supporting new exhibitions, a state-of-the-art paleontology center, a more efficient Atrium roof, and our new native plant gardens.

Thanks to local government, foundations, and prominent philanthropists, we have made great progress toward our goal. With the help of our community, we can close the gap to complete the Campaign, allowing us to work harder than ever before to preserve, protect, and nurture nature in this amazing place we call home.

The Nat's efforts in public engagement, conservation, and partnerships help create a resilient future for generations to come.



Introducing the Christy Walton President and CEO Endowment

For the past 35 years, the Museum has been fortunate to attract skilled, nationally recognized leadership. Under the guidance of Mick Hager and Judy Gradwohl, we have advanced our mission and transformed the Museum. Now, with a generous \$5 million endowment gift from Alumbra Innovations Foundation, we're proud to name the President and CEO position in honor of Christy Walton.

Christy's deep commitment to innovation, community-driven change, and environmental stewardship embodies The Nat's values. This endowment will help us continue to attract top-tier leadership from across the nation and globe, ensuring the Museum remains a beacon for conservation, education, and research.

By naming the CEO position after Christy, we celebrate her exceptional foresight and generosity. Her leadership will forever guide the Museum's efforts in conserving the natural beauty and biodiversity of Southern and Baja California.



Judy Gradwohl



Christy Walton

Los Planes watershed in Baja California Sur is a dynamic and sensitive place, rich with subtle beauty.

HELPING NATURE LIVE LARGE

An early member of the Society explores our region's larger-than-life nature.



Science in the City

Over half the world's population lives in urban areas—currently considered the fastest growing ecosystems on Earth. While we often think of cities as having devastating effects on the health of nature and people, thoughtfully managed urban areas can support rich biodiversity and a high quality of life.

To help realize this ideal, The Nat recently launched two important initiatives focused on studying and preserving biodiversity in urban environments.

OUR CANYONS NEED YOU

Did you know 81% of San Diego city residents live within a 10-minute walk from a green space? The national average for all urban cities and towns is only 54%. Lucky us!



Among the many parks at our fingertips are our iconic urban canyons—beautiful natural spaces that serve as important wildlife corridors, filter stormwater run-off, create cooling zones in urban heat islands, and provide much-needed recreational space.

Although canyons are plentiful and close at hand, they and the species who call them home are still at risk and we have much to learn about these San Diego treasures. How do canyons conserve regional wildlife? What ecological services do they provide to San Diego residents, and how much are these services worth? How can communities help manage and protect their canyons?

To answer these questions, we've launched the Healthy Canyons Initiative—an effort to gather baseline data about the plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds that inhabit San Diego urban canyons. But the work isn't only done by Museum scientists: the initiative encourages local community scientists—including school groups, canyon-adjacent residents, and community organizations—to join in the development, data collection, and application of this work.

The data will allow Nat scientists and others to examine the state of biodiversity in these valuable habitats. It will improve our understanding of the current plant and animal life, inform how to care for canyons, and

increase the invaluable connection between people and nature.

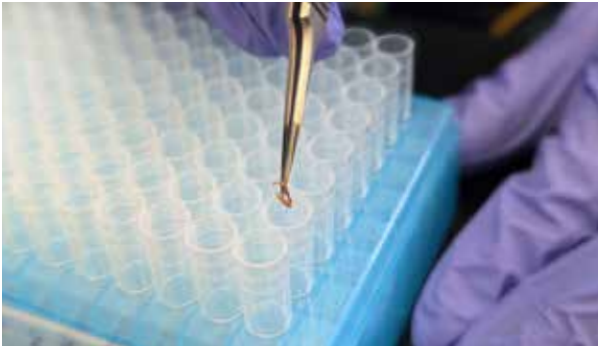
STATEWIDE COLLECTIVE ACTION

California has emerged as an important leader of the 30x30 initiative—a global effort to conserve 30% of land and coastal waters by 2030. Four top-tier institutions recently joined forces to coordinate and enhance statewide urban biodiversity and environmental equity. The newly formed California Urban Nature Alliance includes the San Diego Natural History Museum, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, and the Schell Lab at the University of California, Berkeley.

Led by The Nat, the Alliance is raising awareness about the value of urban nature in California. At the same time, each institution is pursuing its own urban greenspace projects specifically tailored for their metro area. The project is also broadening and diversifying the network of community scientists in California to include neighborhoods and communities that have been historically excluded from such work.

With this larger effort in mind, we are building a network of experts, institutions, and empowered local communities that work together to steward urban landscapes—enhancing biodiversity and building resilient environments for all.

San Diego's canyons are unique areas that are key to maintaining rich native biodiversity in places where urbanization is high.



Building California's First Insect DNA Barcode Library

Documenting insect biodiversity by identifying and counting specimens under a microscope is difficult, time consuming, and daunting because insect communities can have tens of thousands of species. But it's important work: scientists have documented a concerning decline of worldwide insect biodiversity and abundance in recent years, including extinctions.

To address this challenge, our entomologists are helping create a DNA barcode library of insect species that live in San Diego and Imperial Counties. The library will serve as a tool and resource for other scientists in the region and is being developed alongside the University of Guelph and the California Academy of Sciences. Once every species is sampled and sequenced in California, future research on insect biodiversity will be easier and more efficient.

For example, technology like environmental DNA (or eDNA) allows scientists to conduct

field research without collecting actual insects. Instead, samples are taken from the environment itself, like a small amount of soil or parts of flowers, which will have trace remains of insects—like a small hair. Once an eDNA sample is sequenced and an insect barcode is found, it can be matched to the existing insect DNA barcode database we are helping develop.

In addition to reducing the number of specimens collected in the field, which is important for threatened species, this method also minimizes the amount of time and funds needed for field collection and processing specimens in the lab. At the same time, DNA barcoding allows for more comprehensive biodiversity assessments. With this approach, scientists can more easily detect, monitor, and map insect communities in California and help determine actionable conservation needs.

*Sampling for DNA means a piece of a specimen is removed and sent to a lab. Here, our team studies two differently sized insects—a large grasshopper (*Orthoptera* sp.), and an almost-microscopic bat fly (*Basilia* sp.)*

Our Fossils Are Going Underground—Again

For the past decade, the Museum's oversized fossils and other miscellaneous inventory were housed in a rented warehouse in Chula Vista—a solution that, while practical, posed challenges for accessibility and security. Today, our collections and other materials are all back under one roof.

The first step in this process was to empty the warehouse, which proved to be a mammoth task—literally. Items that didn't hold value for our own research or exhibits found new homes with local organizations. Unneeded taxidermy was donated to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, retired exhibit materials went to the San Diego River Park Foundation, and Southwestern College received non-research grade specimens for their classrooms.

But the real fun began when we moved our fossil specimens—from mammoth tusks and whale skulls to ground sloths and tortoise shells—back to the Museum and into the lower level. We also relocated the main portion of the paleontology collection from the third floor to the basement. This move of over one million fossil specimens took an entire month, 15 staff and volunteers, and professional movers to execute. But it was worth it to see our collection reunited in the brand-new Tom Deméré Paleontology Center.

The state-of-the-art space includes a fossil processing lab, demonstration station, and a vast collections storage area that is visible to the public through large glass panes. The space will be complete with a new exhibition highlighting why we collect and what we learn

from collections. We're inviting guests to see the Paleo Center and get an insider's view of how we develop exhibitions during a soft opening period. We can't wait to see the wonder and awe on visitors' faces when they interact with our scientists and exhibit developers at work, and we look forward to celebrating with a grand opening in spring 2025.

The new Paleo Center, named after longtime curator Dr. Tom Deméré (at right), offers a view into our fossil collection—previously housed behind closed doors—and gives visitors a taste of what active research collections look like.





Conserving the Californias

We're more than a building—our scientists actively conduct research and consult with people and organizations that manage wild lands, while our community engagement staff share knowledge and inspire a love of nature. Learn about the remarkable projects and partnerships that bridge borders and help conserve nature in our mission region.

1 SAVING FROGS

After five years of working to restore the California red-legged frog in Southern California, the reintroduced populations are well-established and even colonizing new ponds. Plus, our frog team was recognized with an award from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service!



2 WETLAND WONDERS

In collaboration with Mexican partners, Nat scientists are studying the highly endangered Ridgway's rail in Baja wetlands. Our role is to document the biodiversity around the lagoons and how wildlife interacts with these birds, which will help us better understand how to conserve this species in the U.S.



3 BATS ARE BOOMING IN COACHELLA

Who knows how the western yellow bat is faring? We do, thanks to a two-year study. This species of special concern lives in the palm oases of the Coachella Valley. Unlike other migratory bat species, western yellow bats are doing well, but we'll continue our monitoring to ensure it stays that way.





4 ARE YOU CIRIOS?

More than 20 museum supporters were introduced to the amazing flora and fauna of the Valle de los Cirios on the ultimate “field trip” hosted by Curator of Botany Dr. Jon Rebman, Curator of Herpetology Dr. Bradford Hollingsworth, and Director of Philanthropy Alejandra Saavedra.

7 SCIENCE? YES PLEASE!

Community science was big this spring, with efforts like City Nature Challenge and the Border BioBlitz yielding wildlife observations left and right. Together, the efforts resulted in a grand total of 71,657 new wildlife and plant observations.



10 COOL CAPE FINDS

Nat scientists are gathering information about the plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects of the Los Planes Watershed. The information will be used as baseline data for this area of the peninsula—much of which had never been collected before.

5 CARE ABOUT THE RARE... PLANTS.

A dedicated group of botanists from the U.S. and Mexico are on a mission to uncover rare plants in Baja California. Together, they’re exploring remote areas, sharing knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of plants.



8 NOURISHING PARTNERSHIPS

We partnered with the Barona Cultural Center and Museum and youth from the Barona Indian Charter School to develop informative videos about traditional Kumeyaay uses of native plants. They’re accessible to Park visitors through QR codes in the First People’s Garden on our outdoor Nature Trail.



11 FALL MEANS FOOD

We are halfway through a four-year project to study California gnatcatchers in Camp Pendleton. So far, we’ve found the small birds prefer foraging in fall-blooming shrubs during the seasons they’re not breeding. Research in areas like military bases that are less affected by development can help us better understand threatened species.



6 NATURE, FROM US TO YOU

The Nature to You Loan Program provided 549 loans, reaching more than 175,000 people in classrooms, homes, and other venues.



9 RARE, ENDANGERED, UNCOVERED.

Our scientists surveyed the San Felipe Valley for wildlife, leading to many cool finds. New populations of endangered species like the California gnatcatcher and Stephens’ kangaroo rat were observed, and multiple rare plants have been added to the known flora of the area.



12 SAVING MOJAVE FOSSILS

The PaleoServices team surveyed a solar energy project site in the Mojave Desert. Thanks to their efforts, we added fossils to our collections that would have otherwise been lost to science: the remains of a Columbian mammoth, dental remains of rodents, and mollusk shells.





New Experts at The Nat

New staff in our research division bring innovative thinking, emerging technology, and expertise in climate resilience.

Johno Niles is our new Vice President of Science and Conservation, focused on integrating science and conservation across Museum activities, developing a strategic plan for the department, and overseeing the PaleoServices and BioServices departments that generate \$3 million annually.

Johno has led corporate sustainability and climate change strategies at national and international organizations. His experience in international conservation work, climate resilience, and non-profit management will help The Nat take a more active role in applying its biodiversity research to today's most pressing issues.

Dr. Shahan Derkarabetian is our new Curator of Entomology. A Southern California local and San Diego State University graduate, he returns to San Diego from a post-doctoral assignment at Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology.

Shahan likes to “focus on the weird, rare things that are in the back of the field guides.” His work with historically understudied arachnids, community science, and museum specimens dovetails perfectly with the Museum's mission to protect biodiversity and inspire new generations of conservationists. See page 10 to explore how he's using technology to assist in environmental research.



Johno's extensive background and expertise in conservation and climate change is a critical component of our work. Shahan brings expertise in arachnids and novel technologies to help investigate museum collections.

COLLECTIONS BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL NUMBER OF SPECIMENS:

~8.9 MILLION

SPECIMENS/OBJECTS ADDED
TO COLLECTIONS THIS YEAR:

248,535

ORNITHOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS: 392
TOTAL SPECIMENS: 52,946

ENTOMOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS: 21,218
TOTAL SPECIMENS: 1,560,574

RESEARCH LIBRARY

NEW OBJECTS: 200,000
TOTAL OBJECTS: 317,000

MAMMALOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS: 52
TOTAL SPECIMENS: 25,723

PALEONTOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS: 23,662
TOTAL SPECIMENS: 161,3906

MARINE INVERTEBRATES

TOTAL SPECIMENS: ~5 MILLION

HERPETOLOGY

NEW SPECIMENS: 303
TOTAL SPECIMENS: 77,133

BOTANY

NEW SPECIMENS: 2,908
TOTAL SPECIMENS: 287,830

MINERALOLOGY

TOTAL SPECIMENS: ~15,000

NAT STAFF PUBLISHED 30 PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES THIS FISCAL YEAR. OUR ASSOCIATES PUBLISHED MORE THAN 110 ADDITIONAL PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES.

The Nat's commitment to advance scientific knowledge doesn't just happen through collections and on-the-ground fieldwork—it is also documented through publications.

The following list of publications reflects the individual expertise of our scientists and the collaborative efforts between the Museum and leading research institutions on both sides of the border.

From the importance of collections to new scientific discoveries to artificial intelligence, each publication serves as a testament to the Museum's commitment to generate and disseminate scientific knowledge and to foster a deeper understanding of the natural world.

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

Bold indicates Museum staff and research associates.

JULY 1, 2023-JUNE 30, 2024 STAFF PUBLICATIONS

Previously considered extinct, we have new info about the endangered San Quintin kangaroo rat's population range.

Site occupation and range expansion by the endangered, Mexican microendemic San Quintin Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys gravipes*). J. Andrade-Sánchez, E. Mellink, ... **S. Tremor**
Journal of Mammalogy

Lost in transition: From teeth to baleen and the origin of filter feeding. A. Berta, E.G. Ekdale, **T.A. Deméré**
Natural History

Cold blood and wet skin in hot and dry secondary forests. How do amphibian traits determine persistence in secondary forests? M. Britton, **M.E. Thompson**
OCELOTS, QUBES Educational Resources

An alligator lizard new to science was found! The article received 13,000+ views when it was first published.

Bridging the gap: A new species of arboreal Abronia (Squamata: Anguillidae) from the Northern Highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. **A.G. Clause**, R. Luna-Reyes, O.M. Mendoza-Velázquez
PLOS ONE

An updated list of Opiliones introduced to USA and Canada: A community science project. **S. Derkarabetian**, N. Adams, B. Bal
The Journal of Arachnology

An Opiliones-specific ultraconserved element probe set with a near-complete family-level phylogeny. **S. Derkarabetian**, A. Lord, K. Angier
Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution, 187, 107887.

This study was a rebuttal to a scientific paper that misinterpreted anatomical features in early mammals.

Lateral palatal foramina are not widespread in Artiodactyla and imply baleen in extinct mysticetes. E.G. Ekdale, J. J. El Adli, ... **T.A. Deméré**
Scientific Reports

First records of the flammulated owl (*Psiloscoptes flammeolus*) for the state of Baja California, Mexico. T. Gaona-Melo, G. Ruiz-Campos, ... **P. Unitt**
Western North American Naturalist

Even though the gray vireo breeding grounds in Baja California are relatively small, they contribute dramatically to the bird's population.

From the shallows to the depths: A new probe set to target ultraconserved elements for Malacostraca. J.C. Geburzi, P.C. Rodríguez-Flores, **S. Derkarabetian**
bioRxiv

Breeding status of the gray vireo on the Baja California Peninsula. **L. Hargrove**, **P. Unitt**, G. Marrón
Western Birds

Scientists used artificial intelligence on DNA analysis to separate extremely similar-looking harvest mites into distinct species.

Machine learning approaches delimit cryptic taxa in a previously intractable species complex. H.L.A. Heine, **S. Derkarabetian**, R. Morisawa
Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution

SELECTED 2023-2024 RESEARCH ASSOCIATE PUBLICATIONS

Dynamic evolution of locomotor performance independent of changes in extended phenotype use in spiders. M.B.J. Kelly, M.K. Khan, ... **S. Derkarabetian**
Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences

Dense sampling phylogenomics reveals highly dynamic evolution of Batesian mimicry accuracy in two clades of myrmecomorphic spiders. M. Kelly, **S. Derkarabetian**, J. McLean
EcoEvoRxiv

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

La descripción de nuevas especies promueve la difusión y divulgación científica y la conservación de la biodiversidad. R. Luna-Reyes, **A.G. Clause**
Lum

Geographic distribution and natural history of *Tantilla schistosa* (Squamata: Colubridae). M.G. MacKnight, R. Luna-Reyes, **A.G. Clause**
Revista Latinoamericana de Herpetología

Specimen collection is essential for modern science. M.W. Nachman, E.J. Beckman, ... **B.D. Hollingsworth**
PLOS Biology

The herpetofauna of the Baja California Peninsula and its adjacent islands, Mexico: Composition, distribution, and conservation status. A. Peralta-García, J.H. Valdez-Villavicencio, ... **B.D. Hollingsworth**
Amphibian & Reptile Conservation

Noteworthy collections for San Diego County, California. **J.P. Rebman**, M.R. Mulligan, L.A. Johnson
Crossosoma

Prioritizing the risk and management of introduced species in a landscape with high indigenous biodiversity. J.Q. Richmond, J. Kingston, ... **P. Unitt**, **B.D. Hollingsworth**, ... **S. Tremor**
Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences

Scientists across disciplines evaluate the risks to native species when managing non-native species.

Corrigendum: impacts of a non-indigenous ecosystem engineer, the American beaver (*Castor canadensis*), in a biodiversity hotspot. J.Q. Richmond, C.C. Swift, ... **S. Tremor**
Frontiers in Conservation Science

An ultraconserved element probe set for velvet worms (Onychophora). S. Sato, **S. Derkarabetian**, A. Lord
Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution

Under the hood: Phylogenomics of hooded tick spiders (Arachnida, Ricinulei) uncovers discordance between morphology and molecules. S. Sato, **S. Derkarabetian**, A. Valdez-Mondragón
Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution

Driophlox, a new genus of cardinalid (Aves: Passeriformes: Cardinalidae). B.F. Scott, R.T. Chesser, **P. Unitt**
Zootaxa

Surveys for western yellow bat in the Coachella Valley. **D. Stokes**, M. Combs, **K.B. Clark**
Report prepared for the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission

Phylogenomic data reveal cryptic diversity and deep phylogeographical structure within the common chuckwalla, *Sauromalus ater* (Squamata: Iguanidae). A. Sumarli, **B.D. Hollingsworth**, J.H. Valdez-Villavicencio
Biological Journal of the Linnean Society

Leaf-litter frog abundance increases during succession of regenerating pastures. **M.E. Thompson**, M.A. Donnelly
Journal of Tropical Ecology

Geographic expansion of the common house gecko, *Hemidactylus frenatus* (Squamata, Gekkonidae), in Baja California Sur, Mexico. J.H. Valdez-Villavicencio, **B.D. Hollingsworth**, C.R. Mahrtd
Reptiles & Amphibians

Habitat parameters influencing the distribution of a geographically isolated flying squirrel. C.S. Winchell, D.A. Holway, ... **S. Tremor**
Conservation Science and Practice

Infrequent long-range dispersal and evolution of a top terrestrial arthropod predator in the sub-Antarctic. J.O. Wolff, S.R. Kennedy, ... **S. Derkarabetian**
The American Naturalist

A small population of a plant species new to science was found in the Baja California Peninsula.

This paper highlights the tremendous value of continuing to collect specimens for science.

This paper credits community scientists who found many of the plants and uploaded them to iNaturalist.

This paper describes a genus of cardinal that's new to science.

Compares past and current habitats of the flying squirrel, citing climate change as a possible cause for its decline.

Serendipitous Discovery of Desert Hairy Scorpion Mitogenomes as Bycatch in Venom Data via Nanopore Sequencing. **M.R. Graham**, C.E. Santibáñez-López, J.R. Zehnpfennig
Arthropoda

Track Recognition via Artificial Cognition (TRAC): Preliminary Report on the Application of Machine Learning to Identify Dinosaur Tracks. **P.C. Murphey**, A. Romilio, N.A. Matthews
New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science

An update on the freshwater exotic fauna in the Mediterranean region of Baja California, Mexico. A. Peralta-García, **J. Valdez-Villavicencio**, A. Navarro, **R.A. Erickson**, R.A. Lara Resendiz
BioInvasions Records

Climate change and collapsing thermal niches of desert reptiles and amphibians: Assisted migration and acclimation rescue from extirpation. B. Sinervo, R.A. Lara Reséndiz, ... **P.G. Tessaro**
Science of The Total Environment

Potential economic consequences along migratory flyways from reductions in breeding habitat of migratory waterbirds. W.E. Thogmartin, J.H. Devries, ... **J.E. Diffendorfer**
Biological Conservation

If migratory waterbird populations are reduced, it could cause an economic decrease of up to \$489 million—mostly from losses in recreational birding!

While analyzing scorpion venom, DNA from the mitochondria was also gathered unexpectedly. Mitochondrial DNA is very species-specific and can be used to help distinguish closely related species.

Identifying prehistoric animal tracks can be tricky and subjective. This team developed an artificial intelligence model to help ID these tracks.

Scientists found five non-native species never recorded before in northwest Baja California.

Climate change is causing habitat shifts and species migration—these scientists propose creating new wildlife refuges in cooler, higher elevation areas.

FOR THE LOVE OF NATURE



Early museum staff form a human tripod to get the perfect picture of a bird's nest. This picture was taken in 1926!



Collaboration For Conservation

A fundamental reason for San Diego's conservation success is its conservation management and monitoring programs, which the city has been recognized for worldwide. As threats to biodiversity increase, this work becomes even more crucial. The key to conserving this special corner of the world? Partnerships.

A recently published report addressing our region's most urgent conservation needs was made possible through our partnership with more than 250 participants from many sectors along with leadership from San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the Nonprofit Institute at the University of San Diego.

The report was informed by the San Diego Biodiversity Conservation Summit in February 2024, which brought together practitioners from state and federal agencies, academic institutions, tribes, and community-led organizations from both sides of the border under The Nat's roof. The gathering included presentations, moderated discussions, and feedback-gathering activities. The report was further honed with feedback from constituents who attended our State of Biodiversity Symposium in April and contributed feedback online during a public comment period.

The final report, *San Diego Collaboration for Conservation: Sustaining the Region's Legacy of Biodiversity Conservation*, was published in October. It identifies needs, gaps, and opportunities for regional biodiversity conservation and articulates what success would look like to accelerate conservation efforts for the San Diego region. The report identifies five priority areas where significant needs exist and both the cost of inaction and the opportunity for action is great.

Conservation efforts are made more effective by incorporating diverse voices, perspectives, and methods. This approach is key to building a legacy of resilient ecosystems for future generations. To achieve this, The Nat brings its strong scientific foundation, large public platform, and rich history of biological collections to every partnership.

But the work doesn't stop there. The information in the report will be leveraged by future stakeholder working groups to identify needs and gaps in funding, and pathways and actions that will support San Diego's long legacy of biodiversity conservation.

Hundreds of experts and community members contributed to the creation of the San Diego Collaboration for Conservation report, and The Nat served as the perfect place to convene and brainstorm together.

Transcending Conservation Boundaries

Years of botanical fieldwork, collections data, and work with botanists and conservationists on both sides of the border have informed The Nat's inventory of native flora in Baja California. This year the inventory and the significance of the plant list was recognized and published by Baja California's state government. The plant inventory is designed to improve plant conservation efforts and promote the Mexican state's sustainable development.

The inventory features more than 2,300 plant taxa based on scientific data from The Nat's herbarium and provides detailed information that informs the degree of protection each plant should have. The checklist will be instrumental in crafting a new state endangered species regulation. If passed, this will be the first time California and Baja California have comparable protection categories for plants across border lines.

The publication of this inventory is paving the way for more coordinated and effective conservation efforts along the U.S.-Mexico border and reminds us that the preservation of our natural lands transcends borders.

A binational team of botanists looks at a rare plant in a vernal pool close to the San Quintín coast in Baja California.





The Ultimate Green Team

Long before the first coast live oaks were planted in our new Nature Trail, The Nat's team was hard at work preparing to care for and share valuable information about native plants. Our neighbors at Forever Balboa Park served as the perfect partners. Their Garden Steward volunteers maintain 18 gardens around Balboa Park, and we wanted ours to be cared for with the same level of skill.

With the help of Forever Balboa Park's volunteer management teams, we created the Nat Garden Corps. This collaborative program trains volunteers to maintain plants in the Nature Trail and inspire Park visitors to plant their own native gardens.

We launched the first six-week Nat Garden Corps training in April 2024, several months before the Nature Trail opened to the public.

The joint curriculum was developed by native plant and garden experts—including horticulturists, botanists, and members of the California Native Plant Society. Volunteers learned about regional biodiversity, how to create and properly care for a native garden, techniques for engaging with the public, and the history of the Museum and Balboa Park.

By the end of May, our class of 46 Nat Garden Corps volunteers graduated just in time for the garden's grand opening. In addition to maintaining the garden and facilitating activities and conversations with guests, our volunteers are spreading the word about native plants beyond Balboa Park. They're talking up the beauty and benefits of native plants to friends, family members, and even HOAs all over San Diego County—perhaps planting the seeds for more native gardens to come.



Garden Corps volunteers help maintain our Nature Trail and engage with Park visitors about native plants and wildlife.

New Board Members Offer Community Connections

Five new professionals joined The Nat’s Board this year, bringing significant legal, financial, government relations, and public policy expertise along with important community connections.

“As we head into our next 150 years, we are intentionally seeking a multifaceted board—encompassing differences in background, expertise, age, gender, and ethnicity—to

foster diversity of thought and reflect a wider range of perspectives and experiences,” said President and CEO Judy Gradwohl.

The new members join the talented group of existing volunteers to create an 18-person Board who helps guide policy, strategy, and provide financial oversight for The Nat

Welcome to our newest Board members!



Sarah E. Aghassi, Esq.
*Interim Chief
Administrative Officer
County of San Diego
(Retired)*



Peter F. Cowhey
*Dean Emeritus,
Qualcomm Chair of
Communications
and Technology
Policy Emeritus of
the School of Global
Policy and Strategy
UC San Diego*



Edmond Lay
*Associate
Cooley*



Chikako Okada Tyler
*Chief Financial Officer
California Bank
& Trust*



Victor Vilaplana
*Chief Financial Officer
Verse.ai*

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+ **Joan H. Parker***

15 YEARS

Melba Alvarez	Lynne D. Grenfell
Debbie M. Burnett	Mary Lueking
Carol M. Filloon	Eva McCatty
Pat Gifford	Judythe Roberts
Gerald Green	Mary Ellen Walther

5 YEARS

Joyce L. Awramik	Dolores Garcis Avina
Ashlyn Bahrychuk	Amy Geffre
Caitlyn Bannister	Max Goldberg
Sydney Baum-Haines	Teresa Grider
Julia Boland	Wray Grimaldi
Sarichia Cacciatore	Hanna Hamblen
Yvette Casillas	Thomas M. Hughes
Leona Chemnick	Anushka Iyer
Taylor Cook	Bailey Jagers
April Damon	Michael Jimenez
Deborah De La Riva	Travis Johnson
Gary Dixon	Asilki Jones
Finnegan Eaton	Yuching Jou
Garrett Eaton	Lisa Kairy
Sara Eaton	David Kaplan
Aimee Edmonds	Robin Kendall
Emma Edmonds	Beth Kreckman
Eric Edmonds	Shelby Kuder
Evan Edmonds	Julia Lung
Ellen Engels	Emily Madden
Thomas Fazekas	Susan Madden
Tom Fleming	Karen Marchetti
Billie Sue Fogle-Strickland	Amanda Martin
	Mark Martin

20 YEARS

Susan Linn	Phillip Roullard
Jenny L. McReynolds	Nancy Sams
Nancy Nenow	

10 YEARS

Martha J. Alden	Sonia M. Hernandez
Alan Berlin	Jeanine Kleeman
Richard L. Breisch	Joal M. Mayer
Andrew Currie	Keir Morse
Rick F. Fitch	Alyssa Semerdjian
Irina Fridman	Stacey Vielma
Maria Gonzales Ceron	Donna Zoll
Kate Harper	

Kayla Mason	Nathan Scheffler
Ric Matthews	Patti Schick
Joanne Mccamy	Karen Searcy
Wendy Medlin	Victoria Severance
Barbara Melendez	Laurie Simerson
Chrysa Mineo	Tina Simpson-Hatley
Alexander Moore	Carter Slusser
Theodora Nelson	Lana Smith
Richard Neuman	Julia Soares Parreiras
Kurt Norton	Muriel Spooner
Anne Parnell	Nicolina Stary
Aarna Patel	Amy Stinson
Ketal Patel	Stephanie Stragier
Mittal Patel	Cary Strand
Elizabeth Patterson	Jason R. Sundberg
Liz Perez	Sarah Thornton
Cameron Peterson	Sara Tin
Jane Ploetz	Sarah Van Horn
John Ploetz	Raquel Vasquez
Bill Polk	Peter S. Vroom
Melissa Quiñones	Avalon Warren
Jonathan Rheuben	Richard Weinstein
Johan Sanchez	Elizabeth Weng
Gretchen L. Schafer	Sharon L. Weremiuk

VOLUNTEERS BY THE NUMBERS

310 total volunteers

29,657 total volunteer hours

\$993,213 dollar value of volunteer hours
(in California in 2024 per Independent Sector)

CANYONEERS LED

52 public hikes for **1,086** people
14 school hikes for **497** students
and chaperones

DOCENTS REACHED

3,446 students and chaperones with
135 programs

WHALERS REACHED

9,918 passengers on
84 cruises through City Cruises

NATURALISTS

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

SCIENCE VOLUNTEERS LOGGED

9,771 hours



NATURE IS MEANT TO BE SHARED

Call him the Chuckwalla Whisperer. This photo of museum volunteer Lorenzo Cook with chuckwallas is one of the earliest pictures of these skittish lizards.

The Gift that Keeps on Growing

This spring gave us a big reason to celebrate when the Museum's Nature Trail finally bloomed to life after years of planning. The 22,000-square-foot outdoor garden features plants native to our region that provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. And the best part? It's free—a birthday present to the community that has supported the Museum for 150 years.

Visitors can now explore seven pocket gardens with themes such as water-wise planting, attracting pollinators, and how to create a container garden. We love seeing people enjoy the space—kids hop from rock to rock in the Boulder Garden while couples literally stop to smell the flowers in our Pollinator Paradise that honors long-time Balboa Park volunteer, Betty Peabody. But it's not just people; local wildlife is loving it too. You can frequently spot hummingbirds darting around the scarlet monkeyflowers or native bees feasting on the California poppies.

The Nature Trail is more than a garden—it's also a living classroom. Hundreds of fifth graders are

beginning to learn about regional biodiversity through our new outdoor education initiative. At the same time, our Nat Garden Corp volunteers are stewarding the garden and engaging guests with interpretive carts that highlight the importance of planting native (read more on page 21).

Longtime supporters and project partners joined us for a grand opening in May, complete with floral-themed mocktails and bites from award-winning restaurant Wolf in the Woods. Later in the summer, community members from near and far came out to our Garden Fair to learn about planting native, play games, and pick up seeds to jumpstart their own gardens.

The Nature Trail wouldn't have been possible without an incredible community of supporters and partners, including the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department, Spurlock Landscape Architects, and native plant advisors throughout the region. We are especially grateful to the Barona Band of Mission Indians for their collaboration—portions of the Nature Trail's interpretive signage and online content

highlighting Kumeyaay native plant knowledge were developed in partnership with the Barona Cultural Center and Museum and youth at Barona Indian Charter School.

"We appreciate the staff at the Museum reaching out, and I am grateful to Barona's youth for continuing to educate the greater public about our way of knowing," said Barona Tribal Chairman Raymond Welch. "It builds trust so we can continue to grow together and share with all your visitors that WE are still here. Peyii Enyewaay Esekaayches!"

The Nature Trail is just starting to put down its roots. Be sure to stop by to see how it's evolving. Then stop by again (and again, and again...) because there's always sure to be something new.

Our garden groundbreaking was the perfect way to kick off our 150th anniversary; this birthday gift back to the community will continue growing for all Park visitors to enjoy.



The Biggest Year in Our History

A significant milestone like a 150th anniversary is cause for a good party... and party we did. Our calendar was filled with special events ranging from a gala fundraiser to a free community day featuring a mayoral proclamation and activities inside and outside the Museum. We also hosted events for members, community partners, educators, volunteers, and staff alumni.

But our anniversary went beyond the parties. It was a year-long celebration that involved special promotions, innovative programs, and opportunities to talk about both our history AND our future.

Rather than pat ourselves on the back for surviving a century and a half, we instead used this momentous occasion to highlight the true star—nature.

Our anniversary exhibition, *Action from the Archives: The Nat at 150*, was far from a typical “timeline” exhibit. Instead, we told stories about regional collaboration through archival photos, artifacts, and memorabilia. Since 1874, our team has worked with partners to protect the plants, animals, and habitats that make San Diego and the Baja California Peninsula so special—from preserving Torrey Pines to helping save Isla Guadalupe from the destruction caused by feral goats. Conservation is a problem that can sometimes feel too big to tackle. But by looking at The Nat’s past as told through this photographic exhibit, visitors are reminded that small groups of passionate people have always been able to make a big difference.

Throughout the year, we offered free one-time admission during guests’ birthday months (we’ve celebrated 4,745 birthdays and counting).

And everyone who visited—birthday or not—was greeted by party hat-wearing animals throughout the Museum. Finding all 15 of them became a favorite activity for kids and adults.

We offered commemorative merch, filled our social media with fun facts and photos from the archives, rolled out special ad campaigns and an anniversary logo, and brought news crews behind the scenes to report on both historical achievements and significant future projects.

The goals in all of these activities were to invite people to participate—through coming to an event, joining as a member, or donating—to be part of the biggest year in our history. More importantly, we hope we instilled a sense of pride in place and a newfound appreciation for this amazing place we call home.

We partied all year long—our birthday celebrations included a new exhibit about our history, a wonderland-themed “un-birthday” celebration, a huge birthday block party, and more—the celebratory spirit is showcased here and in the following spread.



HERE
FOR
NATURE







Career Day—With a Twist

You’ve probably heard of STEM, an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math. In the early 2000s, education researchers added art as a key component to help encourage the creativity that is necessary to solve problems in these fields. This year, The Nat participated in the Price Philanthropies STEAM Pathways program, dedicated to helping local students imagine themselves in STEAM careers such as botanists, exhibit artists, entomologists, and more.

As part of our participation in the program, Nat educators created a new curriculum to engage 300+ seventh-graders from Clark and Wilson Middle Schools in City Heights. The goal was to teach students about different career pathways available to them. In collaboration with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and the Comic-Con Museum, we created opportunities for students to participate in the role of select STEAM careers. It was a thrill to see each student

connect to the program—some most enticed by the arts, while others were more enthralled with the sciences.

At The Nat, students participated in activities based on what different staff might do on any given day. For example, staff from our Entomology Department trained students to pin beetle specimens so they could get a taste of the type of work being done behind-the-scenes. Although many students were hesitant about working with insects, they became enthusiastic when they realized their contributions would have a lasting impact on our collections. As the program continued, we saw students engaged, curious, and enjoying themselves—some even asked if they could return in eighth grade!

Educational programs are a hallmark of the Museum, and we look forward to continuing this and other initiatives that connect students to nature in innovative ways.



Students who participated in the program got hands-on experience working with microscopes and pinning beetle specimens.

Talk About Leaving a Mark

You might not know Michael Field (left), or Jim Melli (right) but you can't visit The Nat without seeing their fingerprints everywhere—from the giant megalodon to hidden opossums and everything in between. Together, the exhibit-designing duo has dedicated over 60 years to the Museum. And this year, we're celebrating their much-deserved retirement.

Michael, director of experience design, joined us in 1985. He's led projects including *Coast to Cactus* and *Expedition Baja*, and is known industry-wide for his commitment to sustainable and accessible exhibits.

Jim, our in-house exhibit artist, came to The Nat in the 1970s. His attention to detail shines in his *Fossil Mysteries* sculptures and the illustrations throughout the Nature Trail. Jim also spearheaded our live animal program—a visitor favorite.

While we'll miss Jim and Michael, their creative legacy will continue to inspire us every day. And we know they'll never be far. In fact, they'll probably be in Spanish Village drinking a cup of coffee.



ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

OVERALL VISITATION _____
357,302

MUSEUMS FOR ALL _____
16,533

MUSEUM ACCESS FUNDS _____
5,301 students from Title 1 schools served

IN-MUSEUM SCHOOL PROGRAMS _____
465 programs reaching **17,666** people

IN-MUSEUM FAMILY & PUBLIC PROGRAMS _____
96 programs serving **5,347** participants

NATURE TO YOU LOAN LIBRARY _____
549 loans reaching **175,839** people

WEBSITE _____
867,817 visits
~1,957,923 page views

ENEWS _____
71,967 subscribers

SOCIAL MEDIA FACEBOOK _____
50,280 followers

TWITTER _____
10,617 followers

INSTAGRAM _____
14,887 followers

TIKTOK _____
732 followers

YOUTUBE _____
1,719 subscribers

LINKEDIN _____
7,227 subscribers

62% EARNED REVENUE

\$8.8 MILLION

PALEOSERVICES & BIOSERVICES
\$3.2 million

ADMISSIONS
\$3 million

MEMBERSHIP
\$295K

FACILITY RENTAL FOR SPECIAL EVENTS
\$615K

FOOD & BEVERAGE
\$912K

EDUCATION
\$236K

OTHER
\$591K



38% CONTRIBUTED REVENUE

\$6.4 MILLION

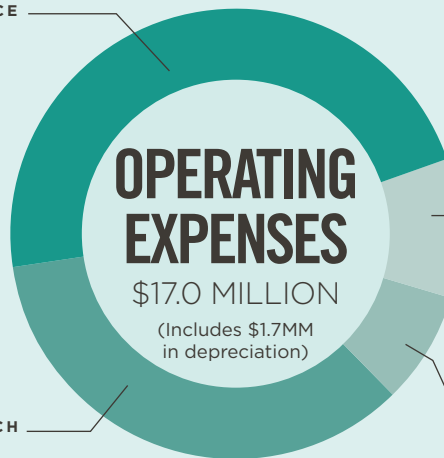
CURRENT USE GIFTS
\$4.9 million

GRANTS
\$496K

ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION
\$1.1 million

47% VISITOR EXPERIENCE

\$8.06 MILLION



10% MANAGEMENT & GENERAL

\$1.67 MILLION

35% SCIENCE & RESEARCH

\$5.96 MILLION

8% FUNDRAISING

\$1.3 MILLION

Financial Overview

The Nat continued its strong post-pandemic financial and operating performance in the lead-up to its 150th anniversary year. Operating revenues grew by \$2.7 million, or 21% to \$15.32 million. Operating expenses (before depreciation) increased 22% to \$15.28 million, yielding an annual operating surplus of \$40k. The out-sized expense growth was due in large part to \$230,000 in remediation expense incurred during the record-setting January winter storm.

The 150th anniversary Capital Campaign continued through the final stages of the silent phase, raising \$5.3 million and bringing the total to \$28 million. Many funds were quickly deployed in development of the interpretive native gardens surrounding the Museum, the 150th anniversary exhibition, and the lower-level Paleo Center. Several additional infrastructure projects were implemented, including modernizing three elevators, replacing the security camera and key-card systems, and various HVAC upgrades.

OPERATING REVENUE

Income from our earned revenue portfolio grew \$1 million, or 13% over the prior year, generating a combined \$8.8 million. Admissions revenue grew 10% to \$3 million due to higher gate prices and visitation. Revenue from our two conservation consultancies increased a combined 9.7%, with BioServices growing 20.4% and PaleoServices decreasing 1.9% year over year. Construction inside and outside the Museum impacted facility rentals, which resulted in 25% fewer bookings but was largely offset by increased food and beverage sales from the events we did host.

Read the full FY 2024 audited financial report at sdnat.org/about-us.

Education programs returned to form, growing over 50% from the prior year, while Membership grew at a modest 1.5%.

Driven by 150th anniversary activity, current year revenues and releases surged by \$1.6 million, or 33%, to \$4.8 million. Grant revenue dropped by 42%, to just under half a million dollars, as State and Federal governments distributed the last of the COVID-era relief funding. Continued strong market conditions and the vesting of new gifts led to 7% growth of the annual endowment distribution, providing nearly \$1.1 million in support of the Museum's operations.

OPERATING EXPENSE

More than 82% of expenditures occurred in programmatic functions—Visitor Experience and Science and Research—totaling \$14 million. Several areas contributed to the year-over-year expense growth: personnel (45% of total increase), facilities maintenance and repairs (16%), consultants and sub-contractors (13%), and advertising (7%). Personnel expenses grew primarily through filling vacant positions and hiring in key growth and project areas such as BioServices and Education. Staff also received cost of living adjustments and an improved retirement match. Sub-contractor and consultant expense increased via pass-through grants and contracted staffing needed to deliver a growing BioServices workload. Lastly, advertising doubled to \$373,000 in support of 150th anniversary programming and events.

Facilities costs ballooned by a third to more than \$1.8 million. Constructed in the late 1990s, many existing building systems are at or near the

end of their useful lives. One such structure—the Atrium skylight roof—is scheduled for replacement in fall 2025 but experienced a dramatic failure during the historic winter storm in January. Unable to appropriately drain the high volume of rainfall, water poured through the roof and into the Atrium, causing more than \$200,000 in remediation and restoration expenses. Unplanned repairs to HVAC equipment and plumbing further drove up costs. Investment in building systems is a major Museum focus going forward.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

This year the Museum added \$2.4 million in individual and foundation contributions and nearly \$3 million in state grants to the Capital Campaign fund. We also collected nearly \$6 million in payments on prior year pledges: \$1.3 million for the endowment and \$4.7 million for capital projects. Construction on the \$6 million lower-level Paleontology Center and visible collections space took place throughout the year, with an anticipated opening in spring 2025. We also completed a \$1.5 million project that converted the surrounding grounds to native and interpretive gardens and brought together partners throughout the region. Design work is underway to replace the Atrium skylight roof, an effort expected to take 2 months and \$5 million to complete.

BALANCE SHEET

Bolstered by Capital Campaign contributions and market gains, the Museum's balance sheet continues to be as healthy as ever. The Nat's cash position increased slightly to \$12 million, with the majority of those funds designated

for forthcoming Campaign projects. In addition to the \$1.3 million in new contributions, the endowment appreciated by \$3 million over the year, surpassing the \$30 million mark for the first time. Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trusts appreciated by over \$1 million, or 11%, to nearly \$10 million. Reversing a trend in recent years, capital project investment increased fixed assets by nearly \$5 million, to \$20.8 million. Liabilities grew slightly to about \$2.8 million due to \$300,000 in construction retentions. The Museum ended the year with a current ratio of 7.1 and leverage ratio of just 3.5%.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Nat attempts to live out its mission by continually seeking ways to operate more sustainably. We recently completed a multi-year effort to retrofit all 3,000 interior light bulbs to LEDs and installed motion sensors in low-traffic areas to reduce light usage. Recent HVAC upgrades improved system efficiency, comfort, and performance. Overall electricity usage decreased by 6% year over year, but rate increases negated any cost savings. For the second year in a row, The Nat's efforts to promote sustainable commuting choices have earned us 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 sdnat.org/about-us.

YOUR LOVE OF NATURE LIVES ON



*Girl Scouts on a nature walk in Coronado.
Circa 1920s-1930s.*

THANK YOU

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

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 (2)
Alumbra Innovations Foundation, at the recommendation of Christy Walton Americas Foundation
Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation
California Institute for Biodiversity, with thanks to the State of California
City of San Diego
The Bernard J. Eggertsen, M.D. Fund at Vanguard Charitable
Estate of Eric C. Koch
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Price Philanthropies
Sefton Family
J. W. Sefton Foundation
State of California

\$50,000-\$99,999

Mona Baumgartel and John DeBeer
The Beyster Family
California Natural Resources Agency
Estate of Mary J. Downing
Tracy and John Downing
Downing Family Foundation
Carol and Henry F. Hunte Fund at Fidelity Charitable
Dr. Seuss Foundation
Subaru of America, Inc.

\$10,000-\$49,999

Patrick Abbott, Ph.D.
Marilyn Alberts
Ms. Millie Basden and Dr. Peter Thomas
Steve & Susan Bell Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation
Susan and Richard Breisch
California Bank & Trust
Council on Library and Information Resources

Mary Dawe
Ms. Janie DeCelles
Janet Dort
Patrick Dugan
H. Glenn Dunham
Mrs. Margaret B. Engel and Dr. L. David Engel
Ms. Debbie Fritsch and Mr. Pat Boyce, at Morgan Stanley GIFT
Andrew and Kathryn Garman Family Fund at Fidelity Charitable
The General Atomics Sciences Education Foundation
Judy Gradwohl
Robert & Helen E. Grant Foundation
Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund
Heller Foundation of San Diego
Hervey Family Fund
Hervey Family Non-endowment Fund
Diana Herron
Chinyeh Hostler
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Jenny and Richard Johnson
David B. Jones Foundation
KPBS **
The Gilbert J. Martin Foundation
National Science Foundation
Eleanor and Jerome Navarra Family Foundation at the Schwab Fund for Charitable Giving
Patrons of the Prado
ResMed
The Rice Family Foundation
Nancy J. Robertson
Iris Sage Fund at Schwab Fund for Charitable Giving, at the recommendation of Lenita and Henk van der Werff
San Diego Foundation
Ms. Anne Schwartz

Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation
Estate of Gaylord Stickney
Mr. Philip Unitt
WWW Foundation, at the recommendation of Bryce Rhodes
Walter J. and Betty C. Zable Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

Alberts Family Fund at Fidelity Charitable
Dr. Allison C. Alberts and Mr. Michael B. Worley
An Anonymous Fund
Dr. Carol Baird and Dr. Alan Harper
Karen Berger
J. F. Beyster Fund, recommended by Jim Beyster
Beyster Family Foundation Fund IV
Vicki and Thomas Blackman
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Buie
California Native Plant Society - San Diego Chapter
Marie Carter-Dubois and Jeff Scott
Ms. Bárbara Córcega and Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra
Mrs. Linda G. Gordon and Dr. Robert T. Gordon
Jo and Thomas Hazard
Michelle and Ron Hebdon
James Hervey Johnson Charitable Educational Trust
Hologic Charitable Fund
Ms. Conny Jamison
William A. Ladd and Anita I. Busquets
Charitable Fund at Schwab Charitable
Las Californias Fund at Schwab Charitable
Dawn Lawson and John La Grange
Peter J. MacCracken
Drs. Anne and Andy McCammon
Dr. Ann McGowan-Tuskes and Dr. Paul Tuskes

Dr. Rebecca Papendick and Dr. Jay Savage
Allison and Robert Price Family Foundation Fund, at the Jewish Community Foundation
Valerie Quate and Jim Myers
SBC Fund at the American Endowment Foundation in memory of Suzanne Bond, recommended by Ms. Laura Bond and Mr. Patrick Sewall
Kathleen L. Strauss
Strauss Family Foundation

\$2,500-\$4,999

Dr. Leslie Anderson and Dr. Richard Anderson, at Schwab Charitable
Eowyn Bates and Christopher Croom
The Paul Bechtner Fund at Schwab Charitable
M.A. Beyster Fund II, recommended by Mary Ann Beyster
Jeffrey Block Giving Fund, at National Philanthropic Trust
Anne and Gregory Bullard
Commonwealth Charitable Fund at the Renaissance Charitable Foundation, in memory of Elizabeth Meyer
Nancy and Jeffrey Conyers
Elaine Dodge and Martin Staubus
Staubus-Dodge Family Fund at Rancho Santa Fe Foundation
Ms. Marion M. Eggertsen
Jen Fisher and Chris Menkov
Jennifer and Burke Fisher
Samuel I. & John Henry Fox Foundation
Ms. Allison Henderson and Dr. Jay Miles
Jaffer Laddon Giving Fund at Schwab Charitable
Helen and Webster Kinnaird
Janet Klauber and James Melli

The Philip M. Klauber Endowment 🌱
Anneli Kyner and Tim Stahl
Ms. Ann Laddon and Dr. Adrian Jaffer
Dr. Mary L. Lindegren and
Dr. Bradley A. Perkins
Lions Club of San Diego
Ms. Barbara J. Lohne
Callie Mack and Phillip Roullard
Mr. Louis Meyer
Mr. Bryce E. Miller and Mr. Don Orahood
Jean and Bill O'Daniel
Melinda Owens and Corin Anderson
Pamela Portillo
Carla and Rudolph Rehm,
at Fidelity Charitable
San Diego County Fish & Wildlife
Advisory Commission
Takahashi Family Charitable Fund at
Schwab Charitable
Barbara and Sam Takahashi

\$1,000-\$2,499

Amy Abel and Aaron Temin, in honor of
Andy Garman, at Schwab Charitable
Irene Abraham and Gabriel Vogeli
Sarah Aghassi
Kris Alberts and Seth Reimers
Alice Anda and James Ward
Christine Baltuth
Lauren Beaudry and Jack Snider
Benevity Community Impact Fund -
Calgary
The Blackbaud Giving Fund by
its Agent YourCause
The Boeing Company
Sarah and Steven Bronson,
at Schwab Charitable
Terri and William Buchanan
Donna Buckner
Dr. J. David Bukry
Dinah and Scott Carl
Cindy and Jeffrey Cavnac
Vickie Church and Christina Graulau
Mimi and Charles Clark
Nicole and Benjamin Clay
Colwell Family Charitable Gift Fund,
at Schwab Charitable
Mrs. Carolyn Colwell and
Dr. Clifford Colwell

Mila and Christopher Conlan
Carolyn and Steven Conner
Ira Warrenfelt and Lisa Croner
Ms. Donna Damson
Mrs. Edward and Martha Dennis Fund at
Fidelity Charitable
Jan and John Driscoll
Elizabeth Schwerer and Kingston Duffie at
Schwab Charitable
Mr. and Mrs. Burch Ertle
Susan and Craig Evanco
Evanco Realty Advisors Inc
Anna Gale and Warren Schmidtman
The Joseph and Anna Gartner Foundation
Charlene Glacy
Mrs. Andrea K. Goicoechea and
Dr. Frank J. Goicoechea
Dr. and Mrs. Michael Hager
Elizabeth Hansen and Richard Adams
Vickie and John Harris
Helix Environmental Planning
Jay Hill and Jim Dax
Carrie and Gary Huckell
Institute for Law and Systems Research
Jewish Community Foundation, Elsa and
George Feher (of blessed memory)
Dr. David K. Jordan
Linda and Anthony Kinninger
Ali and Linda Kiran Fund 🌱
Mr. H. William Kuni
Anne La Dow
Carolyn and Michael Lee
Vicki Lindblade
Brigitte Lindsay
Diana and Lowell Lindsay
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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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Barney Eggertsen, longtime Museum supporter and Live Oaks member, passed away in August 2023. Known for his warmth, kindness, and enthusiasm, he had a way of making every event brighter with his positive energy. Whether engaging in discussions about the latest exhibition or simply enjoying the company of others, Barney was always eager to learn and share his love for natural history and the arts.

Barney's support for The Nat went beyond his regular attendance—he was forward-thinking and deeply committed to our mission. His decision to include the Museum in his estate plans speaks to the depth of his generosity and his belief in the importance of protecting the natural world for future generations. We are profoundly grateful for his dedication and will always remember Barney as a true champion of nature, learning, and community.

Special Events Partners

The Museum offers a unique and memorable event venue for many throughout the year. To ensure success for all events the Museum partners with a group of exclusive preferred vendors who are familiar with the Museum and offer a complete range of services.

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The Nat hosted the San Diego Tourism Authority as they kicked off the bustling summer tourism season and the National Travel and Tourism Week. The event aligned perfectly with our Summer of Wonder campaign launch, which featured new exhibits and extended hours, a new film in our theater, and Nat at Night every week—a great way to celebrate a century-and-a-half of community programs and outreach.



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The Museum's early recreation of a duckbill dinosaur, far from its original site in Alberta, Canada, looms over the exultant Vera Marshall in a 1937 publicity photo.

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