



Berkeley Natural History Museums

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Berkeley Natural History Museums Mission Statement

BNHM is engaged in a number of different project areas that represent the concerns of its six member museums and eight field stations (see the BNHM Homepage for links to these museums and field stations). As a consortium, we are constantly seeking ways to work together to enhance public education programs, informatics, and research. The following items outline where we have been in each area, and where we want to go:

1. [Education and Public Programs](#)
2. [Building Knowledge Networks in Support of Scientific Research](#)
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To inquire further about the programs listed here or to see how you can support the efforts of BNHM, [email our Administrative Staff](#).

Education and Public Programs



Resources available to K-12 students and teachers are currently available through the [UC Museum of Paleontology website](#) and a new project funded by the the National Science Foundation called [Exploring California Biodiversity](#). Exploring California Biodiversity focuses on connecting graduate students with urban schools to engage students and their teachers in field research, focusing on biodiversity and preservation.

In addition to K-12 programs, many of the museums offer educational programs for adults. The Jepson Herbarium has a series of botanical and ecological workshops. The workshops are held at locations throughout the state and are designed to accommodate a range of backgrounds (from beginners to specialists). For more information and a list of classes, visit the [herbarium's web site](#).

The UC Botanical Garden also hosts a series of classes on botanical subjects at the Garden, and are [accessible on the web](#).

BNHM recognizes the value of communicating with the larger public and wishes to expand its program to include online demonstrations of biodiversity analysis, historical reviews of collecting expeditions, and easy access to spectacular specimens within the collections. We also wish to make programs available to bring local schools into the museums on a regular basis.

Building Knowledge Networks in Support of Scientific Research

Central to providing access to our collections is the ability to interact with other collections. To this end, we are actively engaged in the development of [DiGIR](#) (Distributed Generic Information Retrieval). We are using DiGIR to build the foundation for distributed networks for [mammals](#), [amphibians and reptiles](#), California herbaria, and museums of paleontology. We have engaged our efforts also in creating a synthesis of the California Flora through the [Jepson Flora Project](#). Finally, all BNHM collections are linked online through the [BNHM query interface](#).



We propose to expand this vision to include data on genomics, climate, and species observations. This will create a network capable of delivering real-time content to researchers engaged in analyzing critical issues in biodiversity monitoring and analysis. [Click here to view the technical architecture for this concept \(PDF format\)](#).

Digitizing Museum Specimens and Ancillary Materials

We are receiving current support from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Science Foundation, and the State of California to digitize portions of collections. Specific projects include digitizing field notebooks in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, [archiving historic sound recordings in the Hearst Museum](#), and georeferencing specimen localities in the University and Jepson Herbarium and the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Even with these efforts, we still have a long way to go to make all of our collections available in digital format. To this end, we propose to digitize our collections incrementally and focus on specimens and materials with historical significance, sensitive species, and type specimens. This is a multi-year effort requiring support from a number of

sources to fulfill specific goals within the overall plan.

Targeted Research Projects



The millions of specimens contained in the six participating museums have provided the building blocks of data from which scores of researchers have described new species, unraveled complicated kinships among organisms, and reached new understandings of how organisms evolve and adapt to their environments. In addition, Anthropologists worldwide rely on the Anthropology Museum's object and archive collections to provide an historical database for understanding current research on prehistoric and living human groups.

The [Features section](#) of our website describes a few examples of research projects at BNHM. The individual museum and field station web pages accessible on the left pane also have links to many ongoing projects. We rely heavily on external support from many different sources to fund projects such as these.



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