



# AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Annual Report 2015 | *July 1, 2014–June 30, 2015*





Clockwise from top left: Performers take the stage for the Museum's 2015 Spotlight Asia program. Carmen Fariña, chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, visited with students in Milstein Hall of Ocean Life during the Urban Advantage Science Expo in June 2015. Museum researchers conducted intensive surveys of species in the central highlands of Papua New Guinea on an Explore21 Expedition. D.A. Murray (standing, center), shown here with his students in the Hall of Biodiversity, was among the candidates in the Museum's Master of Arts in Teaching program in fiscal year 2015. More than 3,000 students from 47 schools attended Google Field Trip Day at the Museum.

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## CONNECT WITH THE MUSEUM:



For live links to videos and other content in this report, download the full PDF version online at [amnh.org/about-us/annual-report](http://amnh.org/about-us/annual-report).

**Cover:** The last Pinta Island tortoise, Lonesome George, was preserved with the help of Museum scientists and exhibited in the Astor Turret before being returned to Ecuador.

# Report of the Chairman and President

*The progress achieved by the American Museum of Natural History in fiscal year 2015 is perhaps best encapsulated by the commendation given by the National Science Board when it bestowed its prestigious Public Service Award on the Museum in 2015. A federal agency devoted to the promotion and advancement of science, the NSB described the Museum's work as "fostering public understanding of science through scientific research, improving the teaching and learning of science, and training and encouraging the next generation of scientists."*

This captures the dramatic evolution and impact of the Museum's work this year as it continues to seek new, deeper, and more effective ways to fulfill its mission in a time when science and science education are more important than ever.

In September 2014, the Museum held its second Commencement, and conferred Ph.D. degrees on young scientists from the Richard Gilder Graduate School's doctoral program in comparative biology and Regents Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degrees on the second class of Kathryn W. Davis Graduate Teaching Fellows. Honorary degrees were bestowed on biologist and Honorary Trustee E. O. Wilson and Museum Trustee, business leader, and philanthropist Louis V. Gerstner.

The Museum's MAT program was created to offer an innovative, inquiry-based approach to improving science education at a time when science literacy is critical to us as individuals and as a nation. The Museum's program prepares teachers of Earth science—a field with a dearth of trained teachers—to bring science alive for students, while also meeting the challenges of working in under-resourced middle and high schools.

Near the end of this fiscal year, we received news that the Regents of the University of the State of New York voted unanimously to authorize the Museum to formalize its MAT program—which began as a pilot—under the auspices of our Richard Gilder Graduate School and to begin conferring its own Master of Arts in Teaching degrees.

As detailed throughout this report, Museum researchers remain extremely productive across a range of disciplines in biology, the physical sciences, and anthropology. Notably, the groundbreaking Explore21 initiative held its second major interdisciplinary expedition, to the highlands of Papua New Guinea where a team of vertebrate specialists searched for new species and studied the extraordinary biodiversity of one of the most remote regions on the planet.

Exhibitions, perhaps the most visible way the Museum educates, reflect the range of our scientific work and employ new media and technology to engage our visitors. *Life at the Limits* explored the astonishing diversity of creatures adapted to nearly uninhabitable environments. *Nature's Fury* educated the public about the science behind natural disasters. A special exhibition on Lonesome George, the last Pinta Island tortoise and a powerful icon

of conservation, highlighted the global imperative to protect habitat and species. Finally, *Countdown to Zero*, presented in collaboration with The Carter Center in Atlanta, discussed efforts to eradicate diseases, including the extraordinarily successful campaign against Guinea worm. The exhibition built on the Museum's growing research in the evolution and ecology of disease, and we were especially honored to host President Jimmy Carter for a series of events surrounding the opening.

In addition to special exhibitions, 45 permanent galleries, and our Space Show and giant-screen films (both now presented in 3D), the Museum continues to offer an array of educational programs, to name just a few: the weekend Milstein Science Series for families; the Science Research Mentoring Program, an intensive year of mentored research for promising high school students; Urban Advantage, the Museum's signature middle school science initiative now in one-third of New York City public middle schools and BridgeUp: STEM, which is teaching young people, and especially girls, how to code in the context of scientific research.

And of course, learning no longer happens just in the Museum's galleries or classrooms. The Museum now streams public programs through amnh.org, produces many engaging videos including the "Shelf Life" series which explores the collections, and offers free Massive Open Online Courses in partnership with Coursera on such vital topics as evolution, genetics and society, Earth science, and climate change.

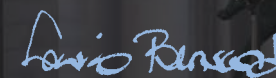
These initiatives are part of our comprehensive digital strategy to extend and deepen our relationships with visitors, through both their online and on site experiences. This year, we launched a major new

ticketing and constituent relationship management system, which significantly modernizes and streamlines the ways that visitors interact with the Museum and its content.

Finally, and perhaps most excitingly, this was a period of extensive planning for a major capital addition to the Museum facility. The new Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, while not officially launched until fiscal year 2016 and opening in 2020, will reveal and invite visitor participation in the Museum's increasingly integrated work in science, education, and exhibition. This technologically advanced and exhilarating new facility will speak directly to the scientific challenges and educational imperatives of our time.

All of this reflects an active and dynamic institution; one that is devoted to studying the natural world, human cultures, and the universe, and fully committed to providing the public with a grounding in science that is essential to full participation in our century. Some of the many millions we touch will become scientists or science teachers; all of them—and all of us—can become more engaged, with a deeper understanding of how our interconnected world works, how we as humans fit, and how we can more responsibly and fully live with one another and our natural surroundings.

This is at the very heart of the Museum's mission and we are so grateful for your interest and participation.



Lewis W. Bernard  
Chairman



Ellen V. Futter  
President

# SCIENCE

The Museum is home to more than 200 scientists who conduct research in anthropology, vertebrate and invertebrate zoology, conservation biology, Earth and planetary science, astrophysics, genomics, and paleontology on expeditions all over the world. The Museum grants the Ph.D. degree in comparative biology through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, one of only two museum-based Ph.D programs in the world.

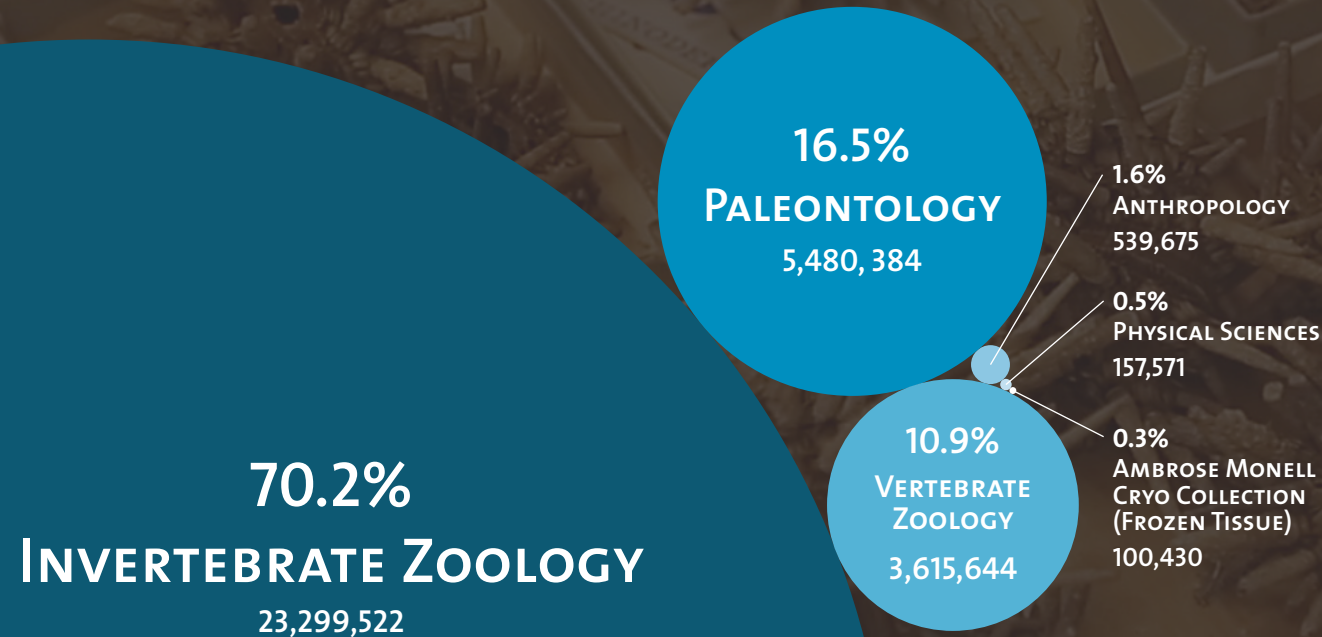
The Ayuwago River in Papua New Guinea was one of the survey sites on the Museum's 2014 Explore21 Expedition.

# Fiscal Year 2015 Collections

With more than 33 million specimens, the Museum holds one of the world's most comprehensive and important natural history collections.

In fiscal year 2015, improvements to the Museum's collections database systems led to refinement in the manner in which collections are enumerated. While 54,646 new items were added to the collections, the current estimate of the number of holdings overall shows a net decrease from 2014.

**TOTAL 33,193,226 SPECIMENS AND CULTURAL ARTIFACTS**



## Shelf Life Spotlights Collections

Beginning in November 2014, the Museum provided an unprecedented look into its vast collections in a new web series, *Shelf Life*. Twelve videos, accompanied by supporting articles and blog posts, took viewers behind the scenes to learn more about the value and uses of scientific collections, offering an inside look at how researchers prepare a remarkable coelacanth specimen, the ways technology sheds new light on ancient fossils from New Mexico's Ghost Ranch, and much more.

Visit [amnh.org/shelflife](http://amnh.org/shelflife) to watch all 12 episodes:

- ▶ 33 Million Things
- ▶ Turtles and Taxonomy
- ▶ Six Ways to Prepare a Coelacanth
- ▶ Skull of the Olinguito
- ▶ How to Time Travel to a Star
- ▶ The Tiniest Fossils
- ▶ The Language Detectives
- ▶ Voyage of the Giant Squid
- ▶ Kinsey's Wasps
- ▶ The Dinosaurs of Ghost Ranch
- ▶ Green Grow the Salamanders
- ▶ Six Extinctions in Six Minutes

# Fiscal Year 2015 In The Field

Field expeditions are a major part of the Museum’s scientific mission, with researchers and curators participating in dozens of expeditions annually. From studying primates in Vietnam to surveying crocodiles in Cuba, fieldwork adds to the Museum’s preeminent collections and informs its exhibitions and educational efforts. Expeditions that took place in fiscal year 2015 are highlighted below.



\* Sackler Institute for Comparative Genomics + Niarchos Expedition

The Museum’s Explore21 Initiative is generously supported by the leadership contributions of Katheryn P. and Thomas L. Kempner, Jr., Linda R. and William E. Macaulay, and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Constantine S. Niarchos Expeditions are generously supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

# Explore21 Sends Museum Researchers to Papua New Guinea


New Guinea makes up about 0.5 percent of Earth's landmass, but it is estimated to be home to an outsized 7 percent of our planet's biodiversity.

The incredible variety of life hosted by the island's largely undisturbed tropical rain forest ecosystems made the South Pacific island a fitting destination for the Museum's 2015 Explore21 Expedition, part of the larger initiative that supports fieldwork focused on discovering new species, developing new collection methods, preserving biodiversity, and uncovering new knowledge about the natural world.

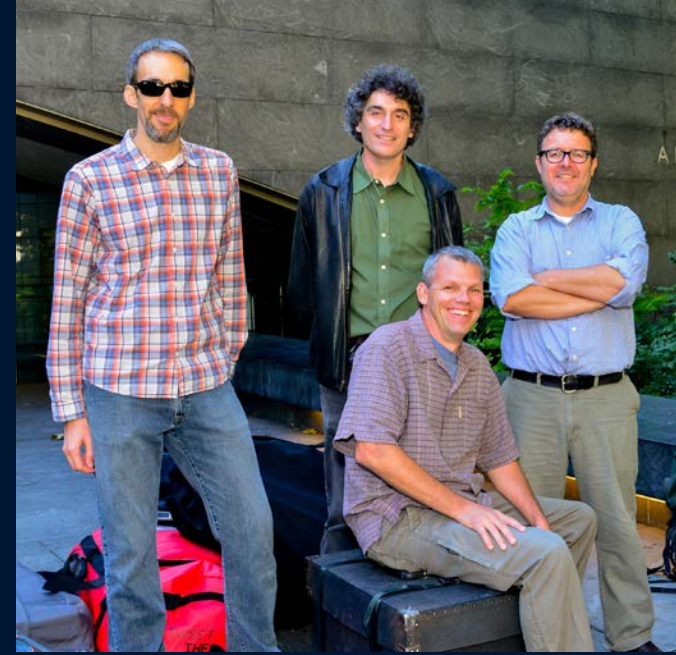
In September 2014, a team of four vertebrate specialists from the Museum—ornithologists Brett Benz and Paul Sweet, mammalogist Neil Duncan, and herpetologist Christopher Raxworthy—began a seven-week expedition in the central highlands of Papua New Guinea, the nation that governs the eastern half of the island.

Accompanied by three local field biologists, Museum researchers conducted intensive surveys of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians at five sites at elevations ranging from 550 meters to 2450 meters to learn more about the evolutionary processes and environmental factors that shaped this island's unique fauna.

Researchers found a bounty of wildlife in this previously unsurveyed region. While study of the specimens is ongoing, the team has already identified more than 20 species that are potentially new to science, including reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Genomic tissue samples gathered on the expedition will add about 180 new samples to the Museum's Ambrose Monell Cryo Collection. Other collections from this fieldwork include parasite samples collected from reptiles, birds, and mammals under the direction of Curator Susan Perkins, as well as extensive behavioral data ranging from amphibian audio recordings to ultra high-definition recordings of avian courtship displays that are being archived in the Macaulay Library at Cornell University.

The team also worked with community leaders in Malaumanda, the village where the expedition team had its base camp, to record the local Nete language names of species collected during this survey, which will allow for survey findings to be shared with local landowners and aid in future conservation efforts. 

*The Museum's Explore21 Initiative is generously supported by the leadership contributions of Kathryn P. and Thomas L. Kempner, Jr., Linda R. and William E. Macaulay.*



**From the top:** Brett Benz, Chris Raxworthy, Neil Duncan, and Paul Sweet prepare to depart for Papua New Guinea. The island's central highlands are home to unsurveyed sites and likely to species not yet known to science.



# Fiscal Year 2015 Research Highlights

The research conducted by the Museum's scientists contributes to its collections and informs its exhibitions and programs. During fiscal year 2015, Museum researchers produced more than [340 publications](#), a cross-section of which are highlighted below.

2014

JUL



STORY PAGE 11

Fiscal year 2015 began July 1, 2014.

CT Scans of Baby Mammoth Mummies Yield Trove of Insights *Calamari »*



Study Led by Indigenous People Uncovers Grizzly Bear "Highway" *Filardi »*

Dinosaurs Fell Victim to "Perfect Storm" of Events, Study Infers *Norell »*

AUG



New Findings Show How Scorpions Make Their Tails *Wheeler, Sharma »*

STORY PAGE 20

SEP



First Coyote Recovered on Long Island *Weckel »*



New Research Identifies Drivers of Rich Bird Diversity in Neotropics *Smith, Hickerson »*



Fossils of New Squirrel-like Species Support Earlier Origin of Mammals *Meng »*



Hints of Gravitational Waves in the Stars *McKernan, Ford »*

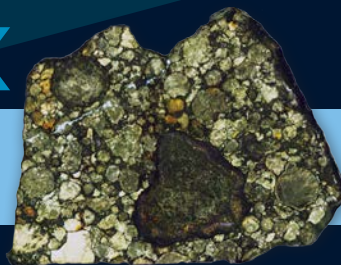
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OCT



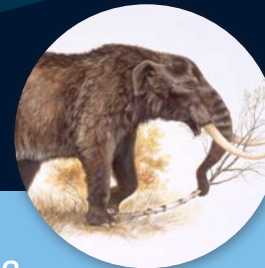
Researchers Discover 52-Million-Year-Old "Ant-loving" Beetle *Grimaldi, Parker »*

NOV

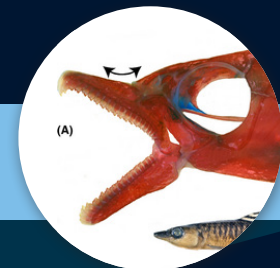


Meteorite's Magnetic Fields Hint at How Planets Formed *Ebel »*

DEC



American Mastodons Lived in the North During Brief Warm Interval *MacPhee »*

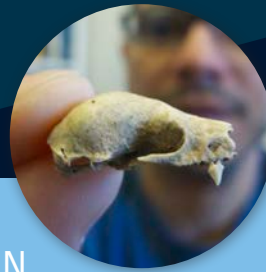


DNA Barcoding Reveals Fish With a Broad Appetite for Fins *Stiassny »*

# 2015



Mapping the "Big Bang" of Bird Evolution *Cracraft* »



Fossils Link Caribbean Bat Extinction to Humans, Not Climate Change *Soto-Centeno* »

FEB



Tracking Evolution's Rate Through Trilobites *Hopkins* »



Scorpions' Detachable Tail Shakes Predators *Prendini* »



Sea Urchins, Sand Dollars Thrived with Time *Hopkins* »



Crocs Rocked Pre-Amazonian Peru *Flynn* »



Researchers Detect Deadly Frog Fungus in Madagascar *Raxworthy* »

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MAR

Hubble Discovers Four Images of Supernova Split by Cosmic Lens *Graur* »



New Study Sheds Light on Mammal Group that Puzzled Darwin *MacPhee* »

APR



Sweeping Up a Planet *Mac Low* »

Building Better Skull Models for Ancient Carnivores *Flynn, Tseng* »

MAY



Study Unveils Exotic Flies Hiding in Urban L.A. *Grimaldi* »



## SCIENCE

# CT Scans of Mammoth Calf Mummies Yield Trove of Insights

Three-dimensional scans of two mummified newborn woolly mammoths recovered from the Siberian Arctic revealed new details about the early development of prehistoric proboscideans.

“These two exquisitely preserved baby mammoths are like snapshots in time.”

Zachary T. Calamari  
*Ph.D. degree candidate*  
*Richard Gilder Graduate School*

Conducted in part by Zachary T. Calamari, a doctoral candidate at the Richard Gilder Graduate School advised by Curators Nancy Simmons and John Flynn, the findings also suggest that both animals died from suffocation after inhaling mud. The findings were published July 8, 2014, in a special issue of the [Journal of Paleontology](#).

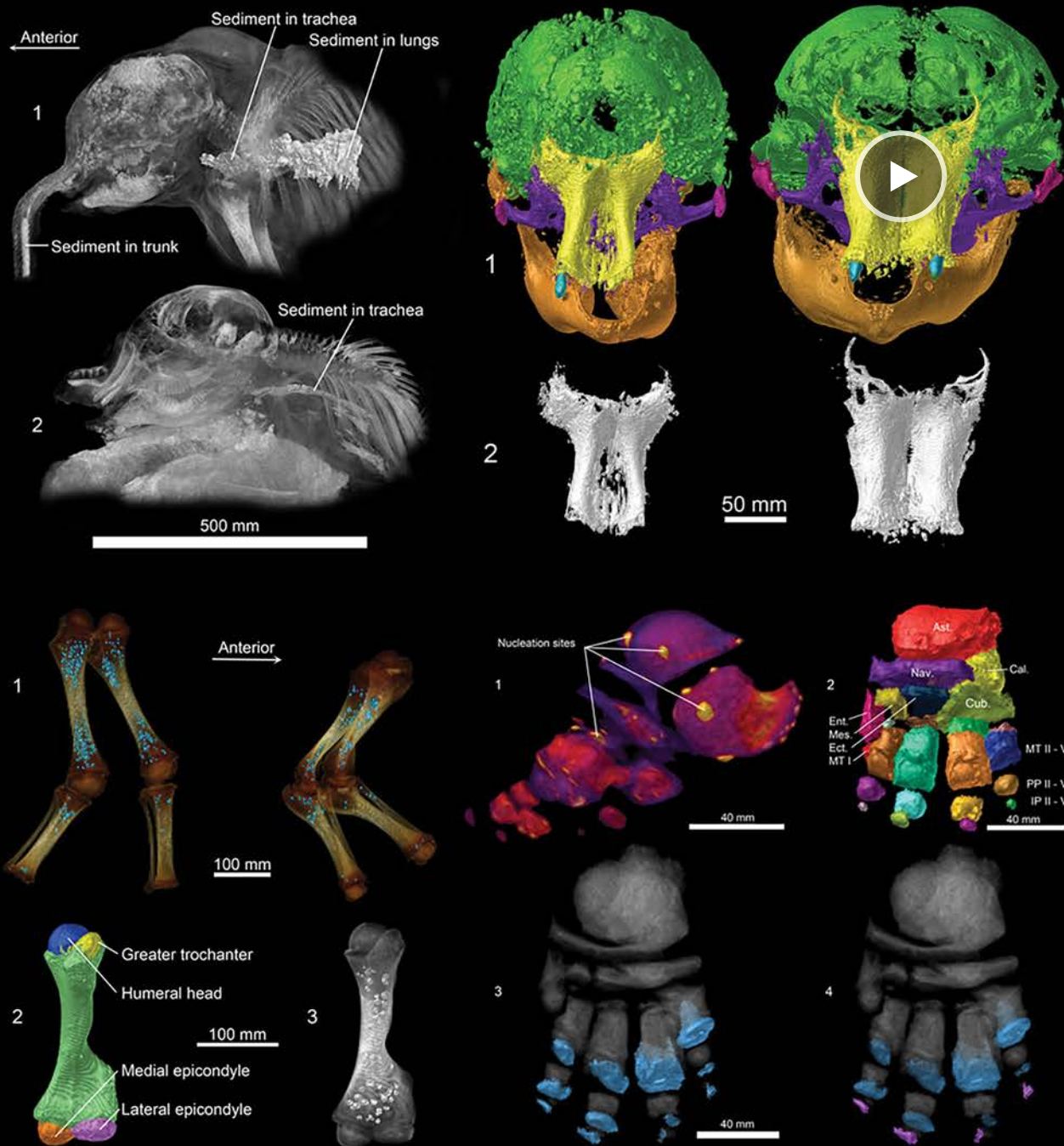
The newborns, named Lyuba and Khroma by researchers, lived about 40,000 years ago and died at ages one and two months, respectively. Recovered from sites separated by about 3,000 miles, they are the most complete and best-preserved baby mammoth specimens ever found and are referred to as mummies by researchers due to the high levels of soft-tissue preservation, including muscle, fat, connective tissue, organs, and skin.

The CT scan performed on Lyuba, which is part of the permanent collection of Russia's Shemanovsky Museum and Exhibition Center, was the first of its kind for any mammoth. Because of her size (about 110 pounds, slightly smaller than a baby elephant), the researchers could not acquire 3D data from her entire body until they found a specialized piece of equipment—a scanner at Ford Motor Company's Nondestructive Evaluation Laboratory in Livonia, Michigan.

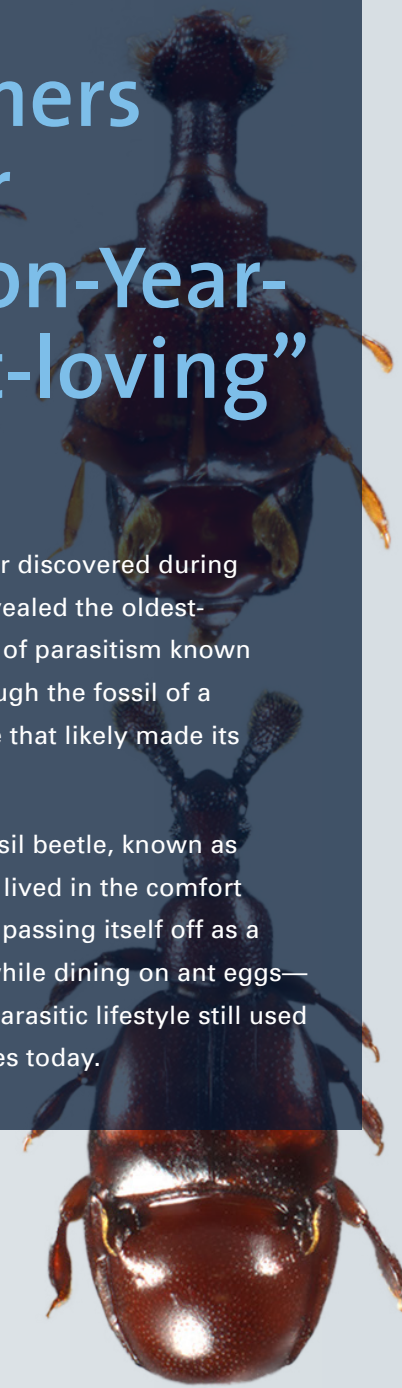
"These two exquisitely preserved baby mammoths are like snapshots in time," said Calamari. "We can use them to understand how factors like location and age influenced the way mammoths grew into the huge adults that captivate us today."

The scans gave researchers insights into the development of mammoths, which they can compare to their modern descendants, elephants. Khroma's skull, for instance, showed she had a brain slightly smaller than that of a newborn elephant, suggesting that mammoths had a shorter gestation period.

Lyuba's skull, meanwhile, was conspicuously narrower than Khroma's, and her upper jawbones are more slender, while Khroma's shoulder blades and foot bones are more developed. These differences may simply reflect the one-month age difference between the calves, or they could relate to the different populations from which the two calves were derived.



CT scans like these provide paleontologists with unprecedented insights into the development of woolly mammoths.



## SCIENCE

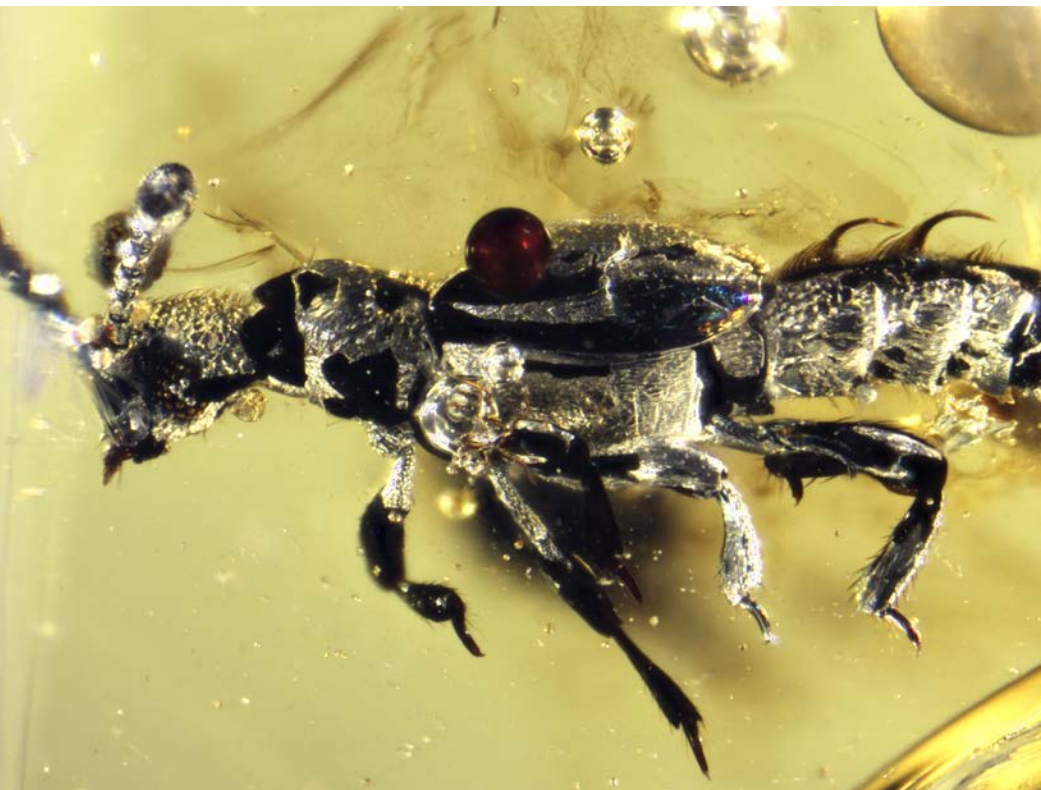
# Researchers Discover 52-Million-Year-Old “Ant-loving” Beetle

An ancient piece of amber discovered during an expedition to India revealed the oldest-known example of a kind of parasitism known as “myrmecophily,” through the fossil of a 52-million-year-old beetle that likely made its living by mimicking ants.

Researchers think the fossil beetle, known as *Protoclaviger trichodens*, lived in the comfort of ant nests, an impostor passing itself off as a member of the nest, all while dining on ant eggs—an early example of the parasitic lifestyle still used by some species of beetles today.

“These beetles were right there inside the ant colonies, deceiving them and exploiting them.”

Joseph Parker  
Museum Research Associate



**Left:** *Protoclaviger trichodens*, an early example of myrmecophilous beetles that parasitize ant colonies. **Right:** Myrmecophilous beetles interacting with host ants in Peru.

A study published in the journal [Current Biology](#) found that the rise of these stealthy beetles, which infiltrate ant nests around the world, took place alongside the ecological ascent of modern ants into the common insect they are today.

“Although ants are an integral part of most terrestrial ecosystems today, at the time that this beetle was walking the Earth, ants were just beginning to take off, and these beetles were right there inside the ant colonies, deceiving them and exploiting them,” said lead author Joseph Parker, a Museum research associate and postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University.


Today, there are about 370 described species belonging to Clavigeritae, a group of myrmecophilous, or “ant-loving,” beetles measuring about 1 to 3 millimeters in length.

Although Clavigeritae beetles are species-rich, they are quite rarely encountered in nature. The newly discovered specimen—brought to Parker’s attention by Museum Curator [David Grimaldi](#), an expert in amber fossils—is thought to be the first fossil of this group to be discovered. The fossil was found in an amber deposit in what was once a rain forest environment in modern-day India, which was uncovered during a Constantine S. Niarchos Expedition supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Modern Clavigeritae beetles use a suite of remarkable adaptations to bypass the fortress-like security of ant nests, which use pheromones to identify, and then dismember and consume, intruders. Using methods that scientists are still trying to understand, Clavigeritae beetles are able to pass through these defenses unhindered and integrate themselves seamlessly into the life of a colony.

“Adopting this lifestyle brings lots of benefits. These beetles live in a climate-controlled nest that is well protected against predators, and they have access to a great deal of food, including the ants’ eggs and brood, and, most remarkably, liquid food regurgitated directly to their mouths by the worker ants themselves,” Parker said.

Although the body of the newly discovered *Protoclaviger* specimen is very similar to modern Clavigeritae beetles, some of its characteristics are clearly more primitive. For example, the fossil’s abdominal segments are still distinct, whereas in modern beetles they are fused together into a single segment resembling a shield.

“*Protoclaviger* is a truly transitional fossil,” Parker said. “It marks a big step along the pathway that led to the highly modified social parasites we see today, and it helps us figure out the sequence of events that led to this sophisticated morphology.” 

## SCIENCE

# Museum Researchers Find Deadly Frog Fungus in Madagascar

In 2015, an international team of amphibian experts including Museum Curator Christopher Raxworthy discovered that a fungus responsible for the decline of frog populations worldwide has been detected in Madagascar.

“Malagasy frogs had been living in a Bd fungus-free zone of the world...now this is not the case.”

Chris Raxworthy  
*Curator-in-Charge*  
*Department of Herpetology*



**Left:** Chris Raxworthy (center) in the field in Madagascar. **Right:** A frog of the genus *Mantidactylus*. Bd fungus in Madagascar was first found in members of this as-yet-undescribed species.

In a paper published in the journal [Scientific Reports](#) in February 2015, the researchers documented the detection of the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd) in the island’s wild amphibians. The discovery has spurred conservationists to action in Madagascar, which is home to about 7 percent of the world’s amphibian species.

Raxworthy, a co-author on the paper, noted that frogs in Madagascar had long been living in a part of the world free of the Bd fungus. The new study shows clearly that this is no longer the case.

The fungus, which causes the infectious amphibian disease chytridiomycosis, was first discovered in 2010-11 in Madagascar’s remote Makay Massif, in the south-central region of the island.

Surprisingly, this area is far from seaports, airports, and major towns and roads, and so does not fit a typical pattern of human introduction.

For their study, the researchers screened more than 4,100 amphibians across Madagascar and confirmed the presence of Bd in five locations on the island. Bd has been detected in more than 500 species worldwide, and at least 200 species have declined as a result of chytrid infection.

Raxworthy and the other authors are working on determining whether the fungus they detected belongs to the deadly strain implicated in these worldwide amphibian die-offs. So far, there have been no frog deaths reported in Madagascar that are associated with Bd, but researchers are urging the development of a strategy for monitoring, preventing, and mitigating the infection.

This strategy is especially important because Madagascar harbors an extraordinary array of amphibian diversity, with more than 290 described species and over 200 undescribed candidate species.

“We know how bad this could be, but this time we can still make a difference by preventing the kinds of mass die-offs we’ve seen in other countries,” said Reid Harris, co-author on the paper and director of international disease mitigation for the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA). “Together, the global conservation community is addressing the emergency at its inception, putting into practice what we’ve learned in the midst of—or even after—extinctions in places like Central America.”



# Curators, Deans, and Directors

## **Michael J. Novacek**

Senior Vice President and Provost of Science  
Curator, Division of Paleontology

## **John J. Flynn**

Dean, Richard Gilder Graduate School  
Frick Curator of Fossil Mammals,  
Division of Paleontology

## **Scott A. Schaefer**

Associate Dean of Science for Collections  
Curator, Division of Vertebrate Zoology (Ichthyology)  
Professor, Richard Gilder Graduate School

## **Christopher J. Raxworthy**

Associate Dean of Science for  
Education and Exhibition  
Curator-in-Charge, Division of  
Vertebrate Zoology (Herpetology)

## **DIVISION OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

Curators in the Division of Anthropology conduct research around the world in the areas of ethnology, archaeology, and biological anthropology. The division's collections include more than 500,000 objects representing the peoples of the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific Islands.

## **Laurel Kendall**

Division Chair and Curator, Asian Ethnology

## **Alex de Voogt**

Assistant Curator, African Ethnology

## **Jenny Newell**

Assistant Curator, Pacific Ethnology

## **Brian Richmond**

Curator, Human Origins

## **Charles S. Spencer**

Curator, Mexican and Central American Archaeology

## **David Hurst Thomas**

Curator, North American Ethnology

## **Peter Whiteley**

Curator, North American Ethnology

## **DIVISION OF INVERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY**

Scientists in the Division of Invertebrate Zoology study and archive the living non-vertebrate animals, which make up 95 percent of all animal species. This division houses more than 23 million specimens comprising about 500,000 species.

## **James Carpenter**

Division Chair and Peter J. Solomon Family Curator

## **Robert DeSalle, Curator**

## **David A. Grimaldi, Curator**

## **Eunsoo Kim, Assistant Curator**

## **Susan L. Perkins, Associate Curator**

## **Lorenzo Prendini, Curator**

## **Estefanía Rodríguez, Associate Curator**

## **Jerome G. Rozen, Jr., Curator**

## **Mark Siddall, Curator**

## **Ward C. Wheeler, Curator**

## **DIVISION OF PALEONTOLOGY**

Curators in the Division of Paleontology work to describe the diversity of extinct invertebrates and vertebrates and explore the mechanisms driving their evolution and extinction. The Museum's preeminent paleontology collections, with more than 5 million specimens, are divided into four units: Fossil Amphibians, Reptiles, and Birds (FARB); Fossil Fish; Fossil Invertebrates; and Fossil Mammals.

## **Mark A. Norell**

Division Chair and Macaulay Curator of Paleontology

## **John Flynn**

Frick Curator of Fossil Mammals

## **Melanie Hopkins, Assistant Curator**

## **Neil H. Landman, Curator**

## **John G. Maisey**

Herbert R. and Evelyn Axelrod Curator

## **Jin Meng, Curator**

## **Michael J. Novacek, Curator**

## **DIVISION OF PHYSICAL SCIENCES**

Scientists in the Division of Physical Sciences study the origin and evolution of galaxies, stars, and planets with particular emphasis on planet Earth. The division includes the Department of Astrophysics and the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

## **Denton S. Ebel**

Division Chair and Curator, Earth and Planetary Sciences

## **DEPARTMENT OF ASTROPHYSICS**

The Department of Astrophysics is located in the Frederick P. and Sandra Priest Rose Center for Earth and Space at the American Museum of Natural History. Research covers theory, observation, and instrumentation, with investigations focused on exoplanets, brown dwarfs, the formation of planets, stars, and galaxies, the evolution of stars and gas in the universe, and large-scale surveys.

## **Mordecai-Mark Mac Low, Curator**

## **Rebecca Oppenheimer, Curator**

## **Michael Shara, Curator**

## **DEPARTMENT OF EARTH AND PLANETARY SCIENCES**

Scientists in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences conduct research that explores the nature of terrestrial and planetary processes and curate the Museum's world-renowned collections of minerals and gems, meteorites, ores, rocks, and xenoliths.

## **George E. Harlow, Curator**

## **Edmond A. Mathez, Curator**

## **James Webster, Curator**

## **DIVISION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY**

The Division of Vertebrate Zoology houses one of the greatest collections of vertebrate specimens in the world, with more than 3.6 million specimens representing more than 35,000 species, as well as a growing collection of tissue samples for DNA studies. The division includes the Department of Herpetology, the Department of Ichthyology, the Department of Mammalogy, and the Department of Ornithology.

## **Joel L. Cracraft**

Division Chair and Lamont Curator, Ornithology

## **DEPARTMENT OF HERPETOLOGY**

The Department of Herpetology houses one of the most important collections of reptiles and amphibians, with particular strengths in the fauna of Mexico, Panama, much of South America, Africa, Madagascar, Pakistan, China, New Guinea, Australia, and the Pacific Islands. The department is a major center for research, with active collection-based research programs in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

## **Christopher J. Raxworthy, Curator-in-Charge**

## **DEPARTMENT OF ICHTHYOLOGY**

Scientists pursue research focusing on the phylogeny and biogeography of recent fishes, classical collection-based revisionary studies, species discovery through field projects, and detailed comparative anatomical studies. The ichthyology collection, one of the world's largest, comprises approximately 2 million specimens.

## **Scott A. Schaefer, Curator**

## **John S. Sparks, Curator**

## **Melanie L.J. Stiassny**

Herbert R. and Evelyn Axelrod Research Curator

## DEPARTMENT OF MAMMALOLOGY

Researchers in the Department of Mammalogy work to describe the diversity of living and recently extinct mammals and explore the mechanisms responsible for their evolution and extinction. The department houses the third-largest collection of recent mammals in the world.

**Ross D. E. MacPhee**, Curator

**Nancy B. Simmons**, Curator

**Robert S. Voss**, Curator

## DEPARTMENT OF ORNITHOLOGY

The Department of Ornithology maintains one of the largest collections of bird specimens in the world: nearly 1 million specimens, representing all continents and oceans and nearly 99 percent of all species. Researchers pursue projects that include higher-level phylogenetics of birds, studies of speciation and species status, and the description of patterns of geographic variation.

**George F. Barrowclough**, Associate Curator

**Brian T. Smith**, Assistant Curator

## THE SACKLER INSTITUTE FOR COMPARATIVE GENOMICS

The Sackler Institute for Comparative Genomics (SICG) consists of four facilities spread throughout the Museum, each with a unique group of principal investigators whose research interests take them deeper into genomics, phylogenetics, cladistics, systematics, and molecular aspects of research. One of the SICG facilities is the Ambrose Monell Cryo Collection (AMCC), a repository of frozen tissue specimens.

**George Amato**  
Director

## CENTER FOR BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

Scientists at the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation work to mitigate critical threats to global biological and cultural diversity by advancing scientific research in diverse ecosystems; strengthening the application of science to conservation practice and public policy; developing professional, institutional, and community capacity; and furthering the Museum's efforts to heighten public understanding and stewardship of biodiversity.

**Ana Luz Porzecanski**  
Director

**Eleanor Sterling**  
Chief Conservation Scientist

## RICHARD GILDER GRADUATE SCHOOL

In fiscal year 2015, the Richard Gilder Graduate School awarded 4 more Ph.D. degrees and bestowed an Honorary Science Doctoral Degree to renowned evolutionary biologist and conservationist Dr. Edward O. Wilson. Graduates have gone on to receive the "Science without Borders" Postdoctoral Fellowship in Brazil, a U.S. National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship, and other recognitions. Prior graduates are establishing impressive careers at the Royal Ontario Museum, the U.S. Geological Survey, and various universities and other organizations. As the first generation of Ph.D.s leave, others continue to build the graduate school's reputation. In fiscal year 2015, students and professors earned recognition for their work in media and academia alike, such as alumna Shaena Montanari, who was cited by *Forbes* magazine as one of the "30 Under 30: Young Scientists Who Are Changing The World." In addition, six new RGGS-supported postdoctoral fellows, and several others funded by extramural fellowships or Museum grants or restricted funds, joined the graduate school. Seven Kathryn W. Davis Postdoctoral Scholars continued their research and educational contributions to the Museum's innovative Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Earth Sciences program.

**John J. Flynn**  
Dean

## HAYDEN PLANETARIUM

The office of the director of the Hayden Planetarium operates out of the Department of Astrophysics at the American Museum of Natural History with a mission to bring the frontier of astrophysics to the public via exhibitry, books, public programs, and online resources.

**Neil deGrasse Tyson**  
Frederick P. Rose Director

## RESEARCH LIBRARY

In fiscal year 2015, the Research Library completed the cataloging of the Ornithology Department library and continued its efforts to make book collections held in other Museum departments accessible to researchers. A Council for Library and Information Resources grant to catalog archival collections in scientific departments continued and additional funding was secured from the Leon Levy Foundation to continue this work within the science departments. The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation awarded the library a grant to digitize over 3,000 archival photographic images. The New York State Department of Education's Library Conservation Program funded work in the library's Conservation Lab, with the Oceans and Voyages project focusing on treating works featured in the new book *Opulent Oceans*. The library also hosted a resident from the National Digital Stewardship Residency program who worked to document the state of data and its preservation throughout the Science Division.

**Tom Baione**  
Harold Boeschstein Director

## OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR AND COLLECTIONS CONSERVATION

The Office of the Registrar works on the development of temporary exhibitions; manages de-installation of collections objects for traveling exhibitions; coordinates travel for exhibitions that include collections objects; manages outgoing exhibition loans; and processes accessions to the permanent collections. The Natural Science Conservation Lab oversees conservation efforts across the five scientific divisions.

**Lisa Elkin**  
Chief Registrar and Director of Conservation

## SOUTHWESTERN RESEARCH STATION

The Museum's year-round biological field station in Portal, Arizona, continues to add new workshops, new courses and education programs, support the activities of visiting researchers, and participate in local conservation efforts.

**Dawn S. Wilson**  
Director

## MICROSCOPY AND IMAGING FACILITY

The Microscopy and Imaging Facility (MIF) provides research staff and visiting scientists with time and training on advanced imaging technology, including a computed tomography scanner.

**Morgan Hill**  
Laboratory Manager

## COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCES

The Computational Sciences facility is used by research staff and students to analyze data on a high-performance, 128-core computing cluster.

**Ward Wheeler**  
Curator-in-Charge

# Richard Gilder School Graduates

Commencement was held on October 27, 2014

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY GRADUATES

### ALEJANDRO GRAJALES

Manizales, Colombia

Universidad de los Andes (Colombia), 2005, 2007

*B.S., Biology*  
*M.S., Biological Sciences*

**Dissertation:** MORPHOLOGICAL AND MOLECULAR EVOLUTION OF SEA ANEMONES AS REVEALED BY AN EMERGING MODEL ORGANISM: AIPTASIA (CNIDARIA: ACTINIARIA: AIPTASIIDAE)

**Defense Date:** November 22, 2013

**Degree Award Date:** June 2014

**Advisor:** Estefanía Rodríguez, Ph.D.

**Co-Advisor:** Ward C. Wheeler, Ph.D.

### ANSEL PAYNE

Walton, West Virginia

Harvard University, 2004

*B.S., Biology*

Tufts University, 2011

*M.S., Biology*

**Dissertation:** PHYLOGENETIC STUDIES OF APOID WASPS (HYMENOPTERA: APOIDEA) WITH INSIGHTS INTO THE EVOLUTION OF COMPLEX BEHAVIORS

**Defense Date:** August 21, 2014

**Degree Award Date:** September 2014

**Advisor:** James M. Carpenter, Ph.D.

### PEDRO LUIZ VIEIRA DEL PELOSO

Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil

Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (Brazil), 2007

*B.S., Biological Sciences*

Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (Brazil), 2009

*M.S., Zoology*

**Dissertation:** PHYLOGENY, SYSTEMATIC REVIEW, AND EVOLUTION OF NARROW-MOUTHED FROGS (ANURA, MICROHYLIDAE)

**Defense Date:** August 22, 2014

**Degree Award Date:** September 2014

**Advisor:** Darrel R. Frost, Ph.D.

### DAWN M. ROJE

Los Angeles, California

University of California Los Angeles, 2004

*B.S., Biology*

University of Washington, 2009

*M.S., Fisheries Sciences*

**Dissertation:** MOLECULES, MORPHOLOGY AND MONOPHYLY: RESOLVING FLATFISH (PLEURONECTIFORMES) PHYLOGENY AND INVESTIGATING WHY IT HAS BEEN SO DIFFICULT TO DO

**Defense Date:** September 30, 2014

**Degree Award Date:** September 2014

**Advisor:** John S. Sparks, Ph.D.

**Co-Advisor:** Melanie L. J. Stiassny, Ph.D.

## KATHRYN W. DAVIS GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS (MAT GRADUATES)

### ERIN HARPER BROWN

University of Florida, 2013

*B.S. Geology*

### ARIEL MARIE GOERL

University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2013

*B.S. Geology & Geophysics*

### ROBERT MCKINLEY

University of Rochester, 2013

*B.S. Geology*

### LEAH M. ROBERTS

The University of New Mexico, 2009

*M.S. Earth & Planetary Sciences*

Colorado State University, 2002

*B.S. Biological Science*

### LAURA RENEE CARVER DIONNE

William Smith College, 2014

*B.A. Geoscience and Environmental Science*

### NOAH S. KAMINSKY

Cornell University, 2013

*B.S. Science of Earth Systems*

### CYNTHIA S. MONTALVO

Syracuse University, 2013

*B.S. Earth Science, Spanish Lang, Lit & Culture*

### ZACHARY JOSEPH TRUNKELY

Ohio State University, 2012

*M.S. Geological Sciences*

Denison University, 2008

*B.S. Geosciences*

### JAIME MICHELLE DIPUPPO

Bard College, 2012

*M.S. Environmental Policy*

Lawrence University, 2009

*B.A. Geology*

### TAMARA MACHAC

Yale University, 2010

*M.S. Geology & Geophysics*

Trinity College, 2006

*B.S. Physics*

### ALLISON LEE-ANN PLATSKY

The University of Georgia, 2013

*M.S. Geology*

College at New Paltz, SUNY, 2011

*B.S. Geology*

### WANDA VARGAS

Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY, 2010

*B.A. Geology*

### KENNETH EGRI

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2013

*B.S. Meteorology*

### SARAH REBECCA MARKS

Carleton College, 2012

*B.A. Geology*

### STEVEN RICCIO

Syracuse University, 2012

*M.S. Earth Science*

Virginia Tech, 2009

*B.S. Geosciences*

### EDWARD YANY

Hunter College, CUNY, 2013

*B.A. Environmental Studies*

# Museum Researcher Studies Long Island's Newest Residents: Coyotes

Researchers added the first coyote ever to be recovered on Long Island to the collection of the Museum's Mammalogy Department in fiscal year 2015. "While the coyote is widely recognized as one of the most resilient creatures in North America, the idea of a New York City coyote is still pretty amazing," said Mark Weckel, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation and manager of the Science Research Mentoring Program (SRMP).

In 2015, numerous coyotes were sighted in both Manhattan and the outer boroughs, and as close to the Museum as Riverside Park. Weckel has


been studying this expansion of coyote range as part of a program called the Gotham Coyote Project (GCP), a collaborative effort between researchers from the Museum and the Mianus River Gorge in Bedford, NY.

The GCP studies coyotes using camera traps, which take a picture only when motion-triggered—a method of study that can prove the presence of coyotes in an area.

Students in the Museum's educational programs are also participants in GCP's research. High school students who participate in SRMP monitor the organization's automatic cameras to study coyote

and deer populations in the region and also study coyote scat samples to learn more about their diet.

While only one coyote has been collected on Long Island, Weckel says the eventual establishment of a population in and around the city is a foregone conclusion. But these new neighbors shouldn't worry New Yorkers, as they're not interested in mingling with the city's human inhabitants.

"Urban coyotes have smaller home ranges, and they find the areas we frequent the least," says Weckel. "A successful coyote is the one people rarely see." 

The Gotham Coyote Project's camera traps have captured images of family groups (left) and individual canines (right) in the South Bronx.





# EDUCATION

The Museum offers a continuum of learning opportunities from early childhood through adulthood via its public programs, topical camps and workshops, online and on-site professional development for educators, and a Master of Arts in Teaching. In fiscal year 2015, the Museum was honored by several organizations for its educational and public outreach efforts.

Karole Armitage presented *On the Nature of Things*, a new work about climate change and its cultural context created specifically for the Museum's Milstein Hall of Ocean Life.

# Fiscal Year 2015 Program Highlights

Fiscal year 2015 featured many programming highlights at the Museum. President Jimmy Carter attended the opening of the *Countdown to Zero* exhibition and discussed disease eradication efforts. Coders and programmers from around the region lent their skills to designing software to help scientists at the Museum's first Hackathon.

<h2>2014</h2> <p>Fiscal year 2015 began July 1, 2014.</p>		<p>JUL</p> <p>Evolution of Our Sense of Smell featuring the iPhone</p>	<p>AUG</p> <p>Launch of BridgeUp: STEM</p>	<p>SEP</p> <p>Pterosaurs Educator Evening with 468 teachers from New York City public schools</p>	<p>OCT</p> <p>2014 Margaret Mead Film Festival</p>
<p>NOV</p> <p>Hackathon: Hack the Universe</p>	<p>DEC</p> <p>Kwanzaa 2014: Our Brightest Lights</p>	<h2>2015</h2>		<p>JAN</p> <p>Jimmy Carter: Defeating Disease in the 21st Century</p>	<p>FEB</p> <p>Here We Stand: Honor Black History</p>
<p>MAR</p> <p>On the Nature of Things: A New Work by Karole Armitage</p>	<p>APR</p> <p>2015 Isaac Asimov Memorial Debate: Water, Water Everywhere</p>	<p>NASA's New Horizons Mission to Pluto Educator Evening hosts 335 teachers</p>	<p>Identification Day</p>	<p>Spotlight Asia: Big Cats</p>	

“Our graduates are teaching in high-need schools and in many cases are offering Earth science for the first time.”

Dr. Rosamond Kinzler  
Co-director, MAT Program

## EDUCATION

# MAT Graduates Make An Impact in New York Schools

Science teacher Christina Lee has a passion: sparking young women’s interest in science. She’s working at it every day as she introduces 7th graders at Girls Prep Bronx Middle School to topics in Earth science, chemistry, physics, and astronomy.

A 2013 graduate of the Museum’s Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, Lee is one of about 50 MAT alumni teaching science in New York State. These Museum-trained teachers, who commit to four years working at a New York State high-need school, are part of a concerted effort to address a shortage of qualified teachers in grades 7 through 12 in these schools.

“One highly skilled teacher reaches 100 kids or more per year,” says Lisa Gugenheim, senior vice president for institutional advancement, education, and strategic planning. “That’s why teacher education is such an important long-term investment in our schools.”



Preliminary results are promising. In the two years since the first MAT graduates entered classrooms, not only has the number of science teachers in target schools increased, but the number of students in those schools taking the Earth Science Regents exam has more than doubled—an indication that MAT teachers are having a positive effect on science literacy where it is most needed.

“Our MAT graduates are teaching in high-need schools and in many cases are offering Earth science for the first time,” says Dr. Rosamond Kinzler, co-director of the MAT program and senior director for science education. “They are teaching students who are disproportionately poor, under-represented in the sciences, and in limited English proficiency programs or special education programs.”

A geology major in college, Lee was drawn to the Museum’s MAT program for its unique offerings. The fully funded 15-month urban residency program, which offers a master’s of teaching degree with a specialization in Earth science, was co-designed by education specialists and scientists and includes classroom experience in partner schools as well as an intensive science course led by Museum researchers. In June 2015, New York State authorized the Museum’s Richard Gilder Graduate School to confer the MAT degree, which had previously been granted by the New York State Board of Regents.

As an MAT student, Lee spent seven weeks working with Curator James Webster and Dr. Patricia Nadeau, geologists in the Museum’s Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences and MAT faculty members, to study the behavior of crystallizing magma prior to a volcanic eruption.

“It’s incredibly important for MAT candidates to be able to take part in the behind-the-scenes process of science,” says Nadeau, a Kathryn W. Davis Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. “Everything that’s in the textbooks they use to teach their students is the result of someone’s hard work in a lab

or out in the field, so it’s great that they get a chance to be directly involved in that process before heading off to their classrooms.”

Lee, who taught 10th-grade Earth science in Sunset Park for two years, moved to Girls Prep Bronx Middle School in part because she was drawn to teach at an all-girls academy. Statistics show that gender differences emerge at the college and postgraduate levels, with far fewer women than men attaining degrees in engineering, computer science, math, and the physical sciences. Lee, who is now covering general science, chemistry, physics, and astronomy for middle school students, hopes to help bridge that gap.

“Christina is really aligned with our goals,” says Girls Prep Bronx Middle School Principal Martha Zornow. “We want girls to experience science, to be hands-on in science, to do science.”

As Lee and other MAT alumni work to support their students, the Museum continues to support them in the classroom. MAT graduates receive exceptional professional development for two years through a system called “induction,” in which they are mentored by staff from the Museum’s Gottesman Center for Science Teaching and Learning.

“The goal is to help them to be effective faster,” explains Cristina Trowbridge, one of the induction specialists. “When you have support—and the research shows this—you make bigger leaps.”

*With deepest appreciation, the Museum acknowledges Kathryn W. Davis for her generous founding support of the Master of Arts in Science Teaching (MAT) Program.*

*Leadership support for the MAT program is provided by The Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund.*

*The MAT program is supported in part by the New York State Education Department and by the National Science Foundation under Grant numbers DRL-1119444 and DUE-1340006.*

**From top:** Students extrapolate their heart rates as part of a class experiment. Lee’s students dance to quicken their pulses. A poster in Lee’s classroom details her “weightless” ride in NASA’s reduced-gravity aircraft.



# Museum Wins National Science Board Public Service Medal



On May 5, 2015, the National Science Board (NSB) presented the Museum with its Public Service Award, a prize awarded for exemplary contributions to the public understanding of science.


“We are honored to receive this award from the National Science Board in recognition of the Museum’s efforts to address the national crisis in science education, to increase the public understanding of science, and to prepare the next generation of scientists, science teachers and scientifically literate citizens,” said President Ellen Futter.

Engineer Vint Cerf, chair of the NSB’s committee on honorary awards, emphasized the impact of the Museum’s award-winning exhibitions and educational programs.

“Each year, the American Museum of Natural History shares the excitement and wonder of science with millions of teachers, families, and other members of the public with its exhibitions and public programs,” said Cerf.

The Museum’s signature educational programs include Urban Advantage, a partnership with the New York City Department of Education and other

science-rich cultural institutions that supports science investigations in public middle schools and hosts one of the largest science expos in the city.

Other model programs include the Science Research Mentoring Program, which offers under-resourced high school students the opportunity to learn laboratory skills and pursue research projects under the guidance of Museum scientists. Fiscal year 2015 also saw the launch of the pilot program BridgeUp: STEM, which promotes the use of computer science in scientific research and communication and focuses on promoting computer science to young women and middle-school youth in under-resourced schools. 

*Support for the Science Research Mentoring Program at the American Museum of Natural History is provided by Christopher C. Davis, The Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund; The Pinkerton Foundation; the Bezos Family Foundation; the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation; Inc.; the Adolf and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation; and an anonymous donor.*

*Complimentary test preparation and college admissions support for program participants is generously provided by Kaplan Test Prep.*

*BridgeUp:STEM is generously supported by a grant from the Helen Gurley Brown Trust.*

*Public support for the Urban Advantage program is provided by the Speaker and Council of the City of New York, and the New York City Department of Education.*



# EXHIBITION

The Museum continued to bring the latest scientific research to the public, addressing issues that are both timely and important, such as natural disasters, global efforts to eradicate devastating diseases, and biodiversity conservation.

An interactive table in the special exhibition *Nature's Fury* let visitors explore why some parts of New York City were particularly vulnerable to Hurricane Sandy's storm surge in 2012.



## EXHIBITION

# President Jimmy Carter Opens *Countdown to Zero* Exhibition

On January 13, 2015, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter visited the Museum for the opening of the special exhibition *Countdown to Zero: Defeating Disease*, which focused on worldwide efforts to eradicate diseases such as polio, malaria, and Guinea worm, a parasite The Carter Center has been working to wipe out for decades.

During his remarks, Mr. Carter announced that the worldwide number of cases of the debilitating Guinea worm disease dropped to just 126 in 2014—a decrease of more than 99.9 percent since The Carter Center, the nongovernmental organization he helped found, began leading a coordinated program to eradicate the condition in 1986.



**Clockwise from left:** U.S. Army medical researchers take part in world Malaria Day in 2010. Curator Mark Siddall visits a facility for Guinea worm patients in South Sudan. President Jimmy Carter attends the opening of the *Countdown to Zero* exhibition. Patients reading a comic book about Guinea worm prevention in Ghana.

He discussed the successes of the decades-long campaign to wipe out Guinea worm disease and the challenges that remain in the final push to bring the number of cases to zero. This feat, which now seems within reach, would make Guinea worm disease only the second human disease ever to be completely eradicated, after smallpox.

“It’s a major undertaking to eliminate a disease from everywhere in the world,” said Carter, who was joined by Museum President Ellen V. Futter; Dr. Donald Hopkins, The Carter Center’s vice-president for health programs; and Curator Mark Siddall, a parasitologist who curated *Countdown to Zero*. “Those last Guinea worm cases are very difficult to detect. If it still exists after 30 years, there’s a special reason [for that] in that village.”

*Countdown to Zero*, which focused on worldwide efforts to eradicate several devastating diseases including river blindness,

malaria, and polio, helps to highlight how research, international cooperation, health education, and low-tech interventions can reduce the suffering of millions. In the case of Guinea worm disease, interrupting the life cycle of the parasite that causes it makes eradication possible.

“As a library of biodiversity, the Museum has a responsibility to our visitors to inform them about biodiversity and our relationships to it—and disease is part of that biodiversity,” said Siddall. “Some of the early work figuring out the life cycle of parasites was work that was done here. Without that knowledge, we wouldn’t be able to intercede.”

That kind of research creates a foundation for the work being done to battle disease around the world, said Museum President Ellen Futter during a panel discussion on the evening of the opening.

“Our scientists are working in many areas related to human health, pursuing leading-edge microbial research in ecology and genomics of disease, and amassing a microbial collection that is a tool in that research,” said Futter. “This approach is quite different from, but entirely compatible with, the work of The Carter Center, for whom a specific area of focus is fighting disease.”

*Countdown to Zero is presented by the American Museum of Natural History in collaboration with The Carter Center.*

*Countdown to Zero is proudly supported by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Lions Clubs International Foundation, Mectizan Donation Program, and Vestergaard.*

*This exhibition is made possible by the generosity of the Arthur Ross Foundation.*

## EXHIBITION

# Lonesome George

Beginning September 19, 2014, thousands of visitors to the Museum had a chance to see a global icon of conservation: Lonesome George, the world-famous Pinta Island tortoise who was the last of his species when he died in 2012. The taxidermy mount, which Museum scientists helped to ensure was scientifically accurate, was displayed as part of a bilingual exhibit that underscored the importance of biodiversity stewardship. Following this exhibition, Lonesome George was returned to Ecuador as part of that country's national patrimony.

Found in 1971, decades after his species was thought to be extinct, Lonesome George was brought to the Charles Darwin Research Station on the island of Santa Cruz. There, the tortoise became a world-famous representative of the wildlife of the Galapagos Islands and of the extinctions occurring around the world.


“From the moment he came to Santa Cruz, Lonesome George was beloved by visitors and the local community,” says Arturo Izurieta, director of the Galapagos National Park. “His story was a powerful lesson.”

At the time of Lonesome George’s death, Eleanor Sterling, then director and now chief conservation scientist of the Museum’s Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, was in the Galapagos for an education and outreach workshop with colleagues at the Galapagos National Park Service, the SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, and the Galapagos Conservancy.

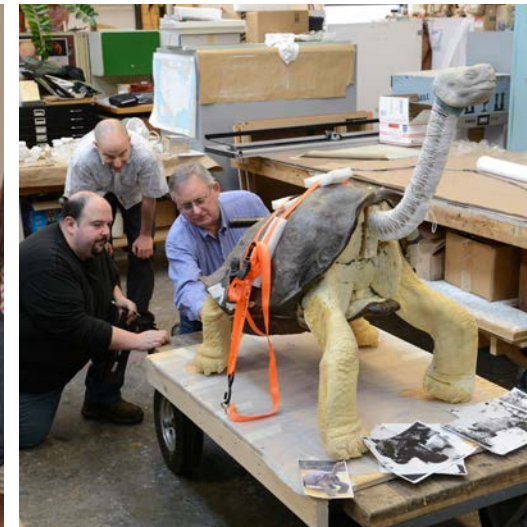
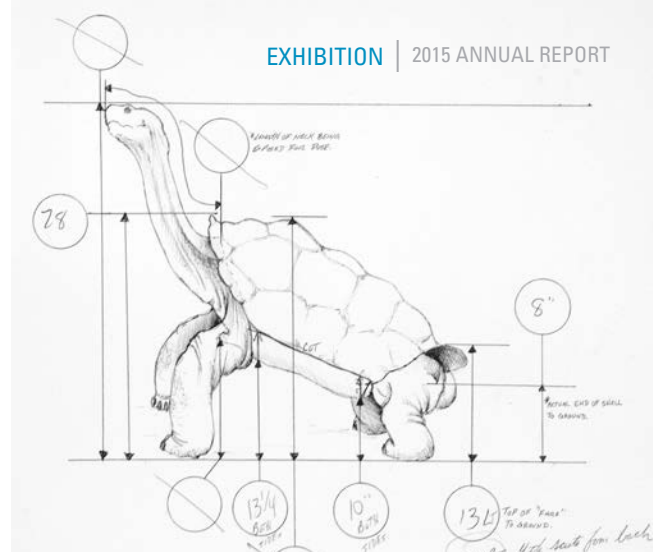
This group worked to carefully pack Lonesome George’s body for shipment—first to the Museum for an assessment by conservation experts, and then to Wildlife Preservations, a taxidermy studio in Woodland Park, New Jersey.

Over the next year, Wildlife Preservations taxidermists worked closely with Museum scientists to preserve Lonesome George as he appeared in life, right down to a missing toenail on his left front foot. The final mount, which showed the tremendous height Lonesome George could achieve by extending his neck, was displayed in the Museum’s Astor Turret.

Developed in collaboration with the Galapagos National Park Directorate and the Galapagos Conservancy, and presented in both English and Spanish, the exhibition was a unique opportunity to tell Lonesome George’s story to thousands of Museum visitors.

“I hope that George’s story, and his unique ability to capture the public’s attention both in life and in death, serve as a catalyst for widespread support of conservation efforts in the Galapagos and beyond,” said Sterling. 

**Clockwise from top left:** Lonesome George in life. Drawings for the taxidermy mount. Museum herpetologists advise master taxidermist George Dante. Lonesome George was displayed in the Museum’s Astor Turret. Lonesome George’s debut at the Museum was attended by guests including Arturo Izurieta, director of Galapagos National Park (left) and Johannah Barry, the president of Galapagos Conservancy (right).



# Fiscal Year 2015 Special Exhibitions

Fiscal year 2015 began July 1, 2014.



## Nature's Fury: The Science of Natural Disasters

November 15, 2014 – August 9, 2015

From earthquakes and volcanoes to tornadoes and hurricanes, nature's forces shape our dynamic planet and often endanger people around the world. *Nature's Fury: The Science of Natural Disasters* revealed the causes of these natural forces, explored their consequences, and helped visitors to understand the risks they pose.

Interactive stations took visitors inside the processes behind each of these natural phenomena, featuring opportunities to manipulate a model earthquake fault, generate a virtual volcano, stand in the still eye of a roaring tornado, and assess the power of Hurricane Sandy via an interactive map of New York City.

The exhibition also examined how individuals and communities cope and adapt in the aftermath of these events—and how scientists are helping to reduce the risks, plan responses, and prepare for future events.

This exhibition was overseen by Edmond Mathez, curator in the Museum's Division of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

*Nature's Fury: The Science of Natural Disasters* was originally created by The Field Museum, Chicago, with additional content developed by the American Museum of Natural History

*Nature's Fury* was proudly sponsored by **Travelers**.



## Life at the Limits: Stories of Amazing Species

April 4, 2015 – January 3, 2016

Imagine holding your breath for an hour and a half. Enduring temperatures above 300° F and below -458° F. Or seeming to cheat death by repeatedly cloning yourself. *Life at the Limits: Stories of Amazing Species* explored the diverse and jaw-dropping strategies animals and plants employ to find food, fend off predators, reproduce, and thrive in habitats many would find inhospitable, even lethal.

The exhibition, curated by Curator Mark Siddall, a parasitologist, and Curator John Sparks, an ichthyologist, introduced visitors to bizarre mating calls, extraordinary examples of parasitism and mimicry, and other amazing means of survival, through specimens, videos, interactive exhibits, and models, including a climbable Hercules beetle.

Amazing live animals were also on display, including the surprisingly powerful mantis shrimp; the jet-powered nautilus; and the axolotl, an entirely aquatic salamander that breathes through external gills. Visitors to *Life at the Limits* got to learn the stories of these and many more creatures across the tree of life—and their unusual approaches to the challenges of living on Earth.

This exhibition was curated by Mark Siddall, curator in the Division of Invertebrate Zoology, and John Sparks, curator in the Department of Ichthyology.

The Museum gratefully acknowledges the **Richard and Karen LeFrak Exhibition and Education Fund**.

*Life at the Limits* was proudly supported by **Chase Private Client**.

Generous support was provided by the Eileen P. Bernard Exhibition Fund.

The exhibition was designed and produced by the Exhibition Department under the direction of David Harvey, senior vice president for exhibition.

## Temporary Exhibitions



### The Butterfly Conservatory November 1, 2014 - May 25, 2015

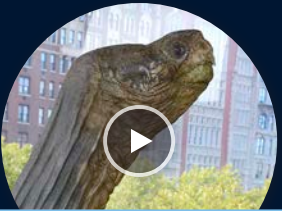
Celebrating its 17th year at the Museum, this annual favorite invited visitors to mingle with up to 500 fluttering, iridescent butterflies among blooming tropical flowers and lush green vegetation in a 1,200-square-foot vivarium.

Generous support for *The Butterfly Conservatory* has been provided by the Eileen P. Bernard Exhibition Fund.



### Spiders Alive! July 4, 2014 – November 2, 2014

The hit exhibition *Spiders Alive!* brought a host of spiders and other arachnids, including scorpions and the chemical-spewing vinegaroon, to the Museum. Featuring 16 species of live spiders, including the goliath birdeater and Chilean rose hair tarantula, the exhibit let visitors explore spider anatomy, diversity, silk, and venom up close.



### Lonesome George September 19, 2014 – January 4, 2015

When Lonesome George, the world-famous Pinta Island tortoise who was the last of his kind, died in 2012, he was preserved by an expert taxidermy and conservation team in consultation with Museum scientists. This mount of the icon of biodiversity conservation was on view at the Museum in late 2014 before being returned to Ecuador.

*Lonesome George* was presented in collaboration with the Galápagos National Park Directorate and Galapagos Conservancy.

The exhibition was designed and produced by the Exhibition Department under the direction of David Harvey, senior vice president for exhibition.



### Countdown to Zero Opened January 13, 2015

Thanks to dedicated health workers, Guinea worm, which once afflicted millions, will soon be gone for good. *Countdown to Zero* introduces visitors to the impressive work being done to eliminate diseases around the world.

*Countdown to Zero* is presented by the American Museum of Natural History in collaboration with The Carter Center.

*Countdown to Zero* is proudly supported by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Lions Clubs International Foundation, Mectizan Donation Program, and Vestergaard.

This exhibition is made possible by the generosity of the Arthur Ross Foundation.

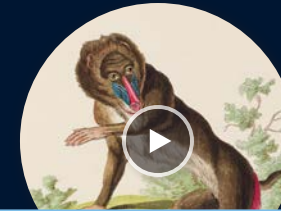
## Awards

### LIFE AT THE LIMITS: STORIES OF AMAZING SPECIES

**American Graphic Design Award**  
*Graphic Design USA, 2015*

### PTEROSAURS

**American Graphic Design Award**  
*Graphic Design USA, 2015*



### Natural Histories October 19, 2013 – September 13, 2015

Featuring scientific illustrations spanning five centuries, *Natural Histories: 400 Years of Scientific Illustration* from the Museum's Library explored the integral role illustration has played in scientific discovery through 50 striking, large-format reproductions from holdings in the Museum Library's Rare Book collection.

The exhibition was curated by Tom Baione, Harold Boschenstein Director of Library Services at the Museum.

The presentation of *Natural Histories* was made possible through the generosity of the Arthur Ross Foundation.



# Traveling Exhibitions and Productions

Developed by award-winning design, media, engineering, and exhibition teams and by educators working with research scientists, the Museum's exhibitions, Space Shows, and the Digital Universe Atlas were presented on every continent except Antarctica during fiscal year 2015.

## TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS

EXHIBITIONS	PRESENTATIONS	VENUES	COUNTRIES
14	26	20	7

Number of locations where the exhibition was shown worldwide, not including the Museum.

- 3 BEYOND PLANET EARTH: THE FUTURE OF SPACE EXPLORATION
- 3 BRAIN: THE INSIDE STORY
- 2 CREATURES OF LIGHT: NATURE'S BIOLUMINESCENCE
- 1 DINOSAUR DISCOVERIES
- 2 DINOSAURS: ANCIENT FOSSILS, NEW DISCOVERIES
- 1 EXTREME MAMMALS: THE BIGGEST, SMALLEST, AND MOST AMAZING MAMMALS OF ALL TIME
- 2 MYTHIC CREATURES: DRAGONS, UNICORNS, & MERMAIDS
- 2 OUR GLOBAL KITCHEN
- 2 RACE TO THE END OF THE EARTH
- 1 THE HORSE
- 1 THE POWER OF POISON
- 2 TRAVELING THE SILK ROAD: ANCIENT PATHWAY TO THE MODERN WORLD
- 1 WATER: H<sub>2</sub>O=LIFE
- 3 WORLD'S LARGEST DINOSAURS

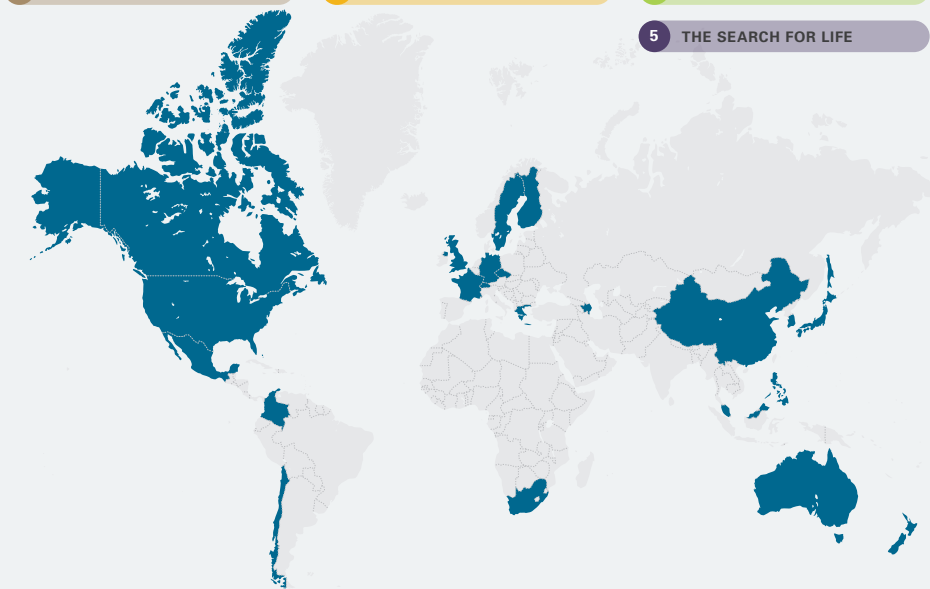
CANADA ●1 ●1	SINGAPORE ●1
FRANCE ●1	SLOVENIA ●1
GERMANY ●1	U.S. ●2 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●2 ●2 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●2 ●1 ●3
GREECE ●1	

## PLANETARIUM SHOWS

● PLANETARIUM SHOW DESTINATION

SHOWS	ACTIVE LICENSES	VENUES	CITIES	COUNTRIES
7	74	55	53	22

- 22 COSMIC COLLISIONS
- 1 FIELD TRIP TO THE MOON
- 11 PASSPORT TO THE UNIVERSE
- 21 DARK UNIVERSE
- 9 JOURNEY TO THE STARS
- 5 SONICVISION
- 5 THE SEARCH FOR LIFE



AUSTRALIA ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1	FRANCE ●4 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1	PHILIPPINES ●1 ●1 ●2
AZERBAIJAN ●1	GERMANY ●1	SOUTH AFRICA ●1 ●1 ●1
CANADA ●1	GREECE ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1	SOUTH KOREA ●1 ●1
CHILE ●1	JAPAN ●1 ●2 ●1	SWEDEN ●1
CHINA ●1	MALAYSIA ●1	SWITZERLAND ●1
COLOMBIA ●2 ●1	MEXICO ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1	U.K. ●1 ●2
CZECH REPUBLIC ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1 ●1	NEW ZEALAND ●1 ●1	U.S. ●7 ●7 ●2 ●5 ●1 ●1
FINLAND ●1		

# Supporter Spotlight

## Shaiza Rizavi and Jonathan Friedland

Inspired by a passion for exploring the natural world, the Rizavi-Friedlands are committed to supporting and expanding science education programs at the Museum to other families.

Shaiza Rizavi and Jon Friedland in the Living Room classroom.



The Museum's award-winning education programs inspire a passion for science in young visitors.

On a weekend trip to the Catskills, the Rizavi-Friedland family came upon a skeleton of a deer that had been killed by coyotes. The children, fascinated, immediately sprung into action. Kira, now 14, scooped up the jawbone, saying, "Oh, I can take this to science class. Let's get a Ziploc!" And they did.

Such enthusiasm is a direct extension of the family's close connection with the Museum and its educational programs. The children—who include Kira's twin, Nicholas, Anna, 12, and Daniel, 7—have been involved since they were toddlers, each in varying degrees, with the Science and Nature program, Family Party, Family Scientist membership program, and Science Alliance, a relatively new after-school offering for middle school students.


"The classes have enabled them to speak science as a very basic vocabulary, as a language," says Jon. "The other day the word 'vaporized' came up and Daniel told me, 'You know,

if you touched magma you'd be vaporized.' " Daughter Anna rallies the family with, "C'mon, *Homo sapiens*. Let's get in the car!" Nicholas, who is more visual, applies an interest in imagery to research projects in astrophysics.

Impressed with the way their children were happily immersed in science, the couple became generous contributors to programs at the Museum that support early childhood education, family learning, and initiatives for youth.

"The teachers here are in a league of their own," says Shaiza, who is a Museum Trustee. "Our children were benefitting from this, and we thought how wonderful it would be to expand it. If you can get children at a young age to hear the vocabulary and become comfortable enough to use it in a way that makes sense in their world, and then apply it as they move through their world, that's so empowering."

This interplay of interests and philanthropy isn't lost on the children. After the family heard a presentation at the Museum on the Ebola crisis, the children organized a bake sale, raising \$1,000 for Doctors Without Borders. They've sold lemonade to raise money for leopard conservation programs and, after a visit to the Bahamas, got family and friends to send letters and illustrated field guides that successfully convinced the prime minister to set aside an ecologically diverse area targeted for oil drilling as a national park.

"Much of our family's life has gone to a different place because of our connection with the Museum," says Shaiza. "The curiosity, the way that the children connect with nature. There is so much to uncover and discover. And the Museum shows us there's so much we don't yet understand." 

# Report of the Treasurer

*Fiscal year 2015 marked another year of solid financial performance and growth in the Museum's net assets.*

Due to continued strength in visitor attendance and fundraising as well as ongoing financial discipline, the Museum generated positive net unrestricted operating revenues of \$132,713 in fiscal year 2015. This positive outcome was the net result after transfers of designated contributions and other revenues to plant and long-term investments.

The Museum's net assets increased by \$64.1 million, from \$838.0 million to \$902.1 million, during fiscal year 2015 due primarily to a strong fundraising effort for the Museum's new Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation.

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
FOUNDED 1859

**UNRESTRICTED OPERATING RESULTS**

During fiscal year 2015, the Museum’s annual Unrestricted Operating Revenues and Support increased by \$8.0 million, from \$175.2 million to \$183.2 million. Annual Unrestricted Operating Expenses, together with transfers, increased by \$8.0 million, from \$175.1 million to \$183.1 million for the same period, resulting in net unrestricted operating revenue and support of \$132,713 during fiscal year 2015.

The Museum continued to enjoy record attendance levels during fiscal year 2015. As a result,

attendance-related revenues increased by \$2.3 million to \$49.7 million, and remained the largest source of unrestricted operating revenue.

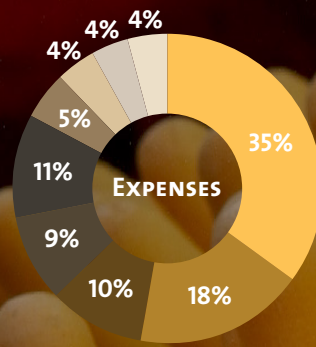
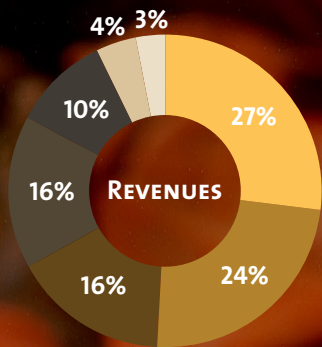
The Museum continued to receive substantial operating and programmatic support from Trustees, other individuals, foundations, and corporations, as well as from the City of New York, the State of New York, and the federal government. During fiscal year 2015, contributions and grants used to fund Museum operations, including a portion of net assets released from restrictions, totaled \$44.4 million. Additionally,

the Museum received unrestricted operating support from the City of New York, including funding for certain energy and pension costs, totaling \$18.3 million. The City of New York also provided capital support to the Museum (see “Capital Expenditures”).

Support for annual operations from the Museum’s endowment—which equals 5 percent of the average of 12 preceding quarterly market values, ending March 31—fluctuates according to market conditions. During fiscal year 2015, endowment support for Museum operations increased by \$1.1 million, to \$28.5 million.

**UNRESTRICTED OPERATING REVENUES AND EXPENSES**

Fiscal Year 2015



- 27% Visitor contributions and admissions
- 24% Contributions and grants\*
- 16% Endowment and related funds\*
- 16% Auxiliary activities
- 10% The City of New York
- 4% Membership
- 3% Miscellaneous revenue and other fees

- 35% Scientific research, education, and exhibition
- 18% Guardianship, maintenance, and operating costs
- 10% Cost of goods sold and other expenses of auxiliary activities
- 9% General and administrative
- 11% Transfers to fund payment of debt service
- 5% Fundraising and membership
- 4% Communications
- 4% Visitor services
- 4% Information technology

\* Includes a portion of net assets released from restrictions

**CAPITAL EXPENDITURES**

In fiscal year 2015, the Museum invested \$13.5 million to fund priority capital improvement projects to meet infrastructure and security needs as well as permanent exhibition hall renovations and new scientific facilities. As in the past, the Museum funded most of its capital improvements from a variety of sources, including the City of New York, State of New York, private donations, and the Museum’s endowment.

The Museum recognized non-cash depreciation expenses of \$31.1 million during fiscal year 2015. Net of depreciation expense, the value of the Museum’s physical plant decreased by \$17.6 million, from \$432.0 million to \$414.4 million.

**DEBT AND OTHER LIABILITIES**

The Museum’s liabilities decreased by \$13.5 million during fiscal year 2015 from \$414.9 million to \$401.4 million. The decrease in liabilities was largely attributable to a decrease in accrued post-retirement health care liabilities resulting from revised plan assumptions including a higher discount rate, as well as a decrease in deferred revenues. During fiscal year 2015, the Museum’s long-term debt and related liabilities remained fairly stable, while the Museum took advantage of current interest rates to restructure some of its obligations. The Museum refinanced a portion of its long-term debt and related interest rate exchange agreements in fiscal year 2015, resulting in an increase of \$13.9 million in total debt and a decrease of \$13.9 million in interest rate exchange liabilities. As a result, total long-term debt outstanding as of the fiscal year-end was \$282.6 million, up from \$268.7 million in the prior period.

**ENDOWMENT FUNDS**

The return on the Museum’s endowment was +2.7% in fiscal year 2015, reflective of volatile worldwide equity markets. Planned withdrawals from the endowment to provide funding for Museum operations and capital expenditures totaled \$33.9 million, and the Museum received gifts and pledge payments of \$6.5 million for the endowment during

fiscal year 2015. Including all investment returns, gifts and pledges as well as planned draws, the market value of the endowment decreased by \$9.1 million in fiscal year 2015, from \$657.2 million to \$648.1 million.

The Museum’s endowment asset allocation is intended both to drive investment return and to provide protection in volatile markets. The Museum’s endowment funds are invested by independent investment managers in diversified equity and fixed income securities and are overseen by the Museum’s Investment Committee. As of June 30, 2015, the Museum’s endowment was invested as follows:

Marketable equities	40%
Absolute return/hedge funds	37%
Marketable fixed income	2%
Marketable real assets	2%
Private investment partnerships	15%
Cash equivalents	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTS**

The Museum continued to benefit greatly from the extraordinary generosity of its private and public supporters. During fiscal year 2015, the Museum raised a total of \$143.8 million in support of its operations, programs, capital improvements, and endowment—a major endorsement of the importance and social impact of the Museum’s work in science, education, and exhibition. As a result, the Museum continued to balance its operating budget, add to its endowment, and make improvements to its infrastructure and facilities.

*Charles H. Mott*

Charles H. Mott  
Treasurer

# Financial Statements

## CONDENSED SUMMARY OF CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

These statements are summarized for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2015, and June 30, 2014, and excerpted from the audited financial statements. A complete set of the audited financial statements is available on [amnh.org](http://amnh.org).

	2015	2014
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and other operating assets	\$ 136,367,734	\$ 105,435,674
Contributions and grants receivable, net	95,669,995	48,803,632
Long-term investments, at fair value	657,011,130	666,596,709
Plant and equipment, net	414,430,344	432,030,961
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,303,479,203</b>	<b>\$ 1,252,866,976</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ 118,783,582	\$ 146,158,348
Bonds and loans payable	282,640,279	268,696,789
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 401,423,861</b>	<b>\$ 414,855,137</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	\$ 317,649,126	\$ 330,399,393
Temporarily restricted	402,065,800	319,737,742
Permanently restricted	182,340,416	187,874,704
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 902,055,342</b>	<b>\$ 838,011,839</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,303,479,203</b>	<b>\$ 1,252,866,976</b>

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES—UNRESTRICTED

These statements are summarized for the years ended June 30, 2015, and June 30, 2014, and excerpted from the audited financial statements. A complete set of the audited financial statements is available at [amnh.org](http://amnh.org).

OPERATING REVENUE AND SUPPORT			2015	2014	NON-OPERATING REVENUE, SUPPORT AND EXPENSES			2015	2014
Investment return designated for operations	\$	19,171,332	\$	18,610,217	<b>REVENUE AND SUPPORT FOR PLANT</b>				
Contributions and grants		27,100,377		24,066,521	Contributions, grants, and miscellaneous income				
Operating support from the City of New York		18,303,807		16,964,933	\$	2,062,508	\$	1,347,462	
Visitors' contributions and admissions		49,665,228		47,386,598	Capital support from the City of New York				
Membership fees		6,488,515		6,510,218		3,701,732		967,984	
Auxiliary activities		29,775,349		28,233,814	Net assets released from restrictions				
Miscellaneous fees and other revenue		6,104,779		6,070,085		70,460		70,460	
Net assets released from restrictions		26,580,495		27,396,304	Transfer from long-term investments and operations to plant				
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>183,189,882</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>175,238,690</b>		18,820,738		25,473,771	
OPERATING EXPENSES			2015	2014	<b>PLANT EXPENSES</b>				
Scientific research	\$	34,494,631	\$	35,801,735	Interest expense not capitalized				
Education		21,181,822		18,701,527	\$	10,042,999	\$	12,428,314	
Exhibitions		8,923,607		7,826,659	Change in value of interest rate exchange agreements				
Membership		2,206,623		2,242,173		2,330,582		(512,004)	
Visitor services		8,193,262		7,648,292	Depreciation and amortization				
Auxiliary activities		18,140,512		17,641,579		31,273,682		30,082,440	
General and administrative		15,973,694		15,658,064	Plant expenses not capitalized				
Fundraising		6,433,035		5,741,091		144,170		234,333	
Communications		7,852,245		7,353,379	Write-off of deferred bond issuance costs				
Information technology		6,513,906		6,182,315		314,816		1,946,072	
Guardianship, maintenance, and operating costs		32,240,144		33,002,207	<b>LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS AND OTHER</b>				
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>162,153,481</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>157,799,021</b>	Contributions and bequests				
Designated contributions and transfers to plant and long-term investments		20,903,688		17,328,771	\$	982,654	\$	1,225,872	
<b>Operating revenue and support in excess of operating expenses, designated contributions, and transfers</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>132,713</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>110,898</b>	Investment return in excess of amounts designated for operations				
						(13,023,750)		13,911,598	
					Net assets released from restrictions				
						12,314,341		11,920,363	
					Transfers from plant and operations to long-term investments, net				
						2,082,950		(8,145,000)	
					Other pension-related activities				
						4,211,636		(7,692,662)	
					<b>CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>				
					\$	(12,750,267)	\$	(4,988,409)	



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as of June 30, 2015

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as of June 30, 2015

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Through a bequest in your will, you can support the Museum while realizing a significant tax savings for your estate. You may bequeath a dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or the residue of your estate after other bequests and expenses are paid. You may designate your bequest to fund a specific program or to provide important unrestricted support for the Museum.

The following language can be used in your will to create a bequest to the Museum:

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