

Vital Statistics

- Located at the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC
- 5 research scientists, 7 museum specialists, and 2 support staff
- Staff affiliated with the Smithsonian's Divisions of Birds, Mammals, and Amphibians and Reptiles

Partnership with the Smithsonian Institution

- Formal partnership with Smithsonian Institution established in 1889
- Patuxent scientists and staff conduct original research on systematics, nomenclature, and biodiversity of vertebrates; and acquire, curate, and manage scientific museum collections
- The unit has curatorial responsibility, in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, for over 900,000 museum specimens: North American birds (270,000), mammals (290,000), amphibians and reptiles (379,000)
- Curation responsibilities include identifying specimens, facilitating the use of specimens and associated data, and handling specimen loan transactions and information requests
- The unit adds, updates, and maintains computerized collection records in all three Divisions
- The unit shares laboratory facilities and research tools with the Smithsonian Institution

Benefits to Scientific Community and Government Agencies

- Providing access to well maintained museum research collections and associated data used by scientists world-wide
- Providing expertise to identify specimens from around the world
- Supplying general and technical information to other units of Department of Interior, other Federal and State agencies, universities, individual investigators, and the public

Examples of Current Projects

- Cooperative faunal investigations in Mexico, Honduras, Guyana, and Peru
- Systematic and life history studies of vertebrates
- Geographic and ecological distribution of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles
- Ecology and behavior of migratory North American birds on South American wintering grounds
- Evaluation of geographic variation and species limits in white-fronted geese
- The A.O.U. Checklist of North American birds
- Taxonomy, distribution, and ecology of South American mammals
- Systematics and biogeography of New World shrews
- Revision of the Checklist of Vertebrates of the United States, The U.S. Territories, and Canada
- Taxonomic and geographic reference to the snake species of the world
- Review and synthesis of information on early life stages of North American amphibians
- The Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS)

