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## **National Museum of Natural History Fact Sheet**

**Total number of employees: 454**

**Total number of scientific staff, research associates and fellows: 625**

**Fiscal 2006 federal budget:**

**National Museum of Natural History: \$43 million**

**Museum Support Center: \$1.7 million**

**Number of specimens in the museum's collection: 126 million**

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History welcomed more than 5.6 million people during the year 2005, making it the most visited natural history museum in the world. Opened in 1910, the museum on the National Mall is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world's most extensive collection of natural history specimens and human artifacts. It also fosters significant scientific research, as well as educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists to the public. The museum is part of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum and research complex. Cristián Samper is the museum's director.

### **Research**

The museum is home to scientific staff and research associates who conduct expeditions and studies worldwide that contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge. This work enhances everyday life in valuable ways, including the development of medicines, improvement of the world's food supply, management and preservation of important species and habitats, and the identification of invasive species.

The scientific staff is organized in seven departments: **anthropology, botany, entomology, mineral sciences, invertebrate zoology, paleobiology** and **vertebrate zoology**. Interdisciplinary research programs bring together scientists from the museum's departments and research institutions

throughout the world. These programs address topics of current importance to society such as biological diversity, global climate change, molecular systematics for enhancing the understanding of the relationship between living things, ecosystem modeling, and the documentation and preservation of human cultural heritages.

A number of affiliated U.S. government agencies contribute to the museum's strength as a research center. These include the Department of Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey), Department of Agriculture (Systematic Entomology Laboratory), Department of Commerce (National Marine Fisheries Service Systematics Laboratory), and the Department of Defense.

### **Collections**

The museum is the steward of the world's largest collection of natural history specimens, objects and artifacts. The Smithsonian's Museum Support Center in Suitland, Md., provides state-of-the-art conditions for storage and conservation of collections, as well as a library and advanced research facilities.

The museum provides off-site access to the physical collections through one of the most active museum loan and exchange programs in the world. The Web site at [www.mnh.si.edu](http://www.mnh.si.edu) provides public electronic access to departmental databases, as well as to online exhibitions and up-to-date information on museum programs.

### **Permanent Exhibitions**

Permanent exhibitions display some of the best-known museum objects in the world. The Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals showcases the Hope Diamond and other treasures of the National Gem Collection. It also encompasses re-created mines and galleries presenting important research in mineral chemistry and physics; plate tectonics, seismology and the study of volcanoes; and planetary science.

The African Voices Hall presents the people, cultures and the history of the African continent through photographs, videos and more than 400 objects from the museum's collection.

Featured in the Dinosaur Hall is a newly remounted Triceratops, in an exhibition that shows for the first time an accurate dinosaur skeleton in virtual motion.

The O. Orkin Insect Zoo offers visitors a variety of exhibits and live insects—as well as daily tarantula feedings—and plenty of hands-on activities.

Among the other permanent exhibitions are:

- Life in the Ancient Seas

- Fossil Mammals and Ice Age
- Origins of Western Culture
- Osteology
- Reptiles: Masters of Land
- Kenneth E. Behring Family Hall of Mammals
- Butterfly Habitat (outdoor seasonal exhibit)

## **Education**

The museum is dedicated to bringing definitive scientific content to audiences across the United States through electronic field trips, video conferences, and hands-on learning activities for school groups and the public. Innovative facilities pioneered by the museum include the Discover Africa Room, where visitors are able to examine African objects up close; and the Naturalist Center, a resource and reference center in Loudoun County, Virginia, where visitors have access to natural history specimens and reference books. The museum also presents free programs including a regular film and lecture series.

The National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C., is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. For information, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum's Web site at [www.mnh.si.edu](http://www.mnh.si.edu).

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