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NEWS MEDIA FACT SHEET

National Museum of Natural History

Director: Kirk Johnson

Total Full-Time Employees: 523

Annual Budget (Federal and Trust) FY 2016: \$117.4 million

Approximate Number of Artifacts/Specimens: 145.3 million

Total museum size: 1.32 million square feet

Public space size: 325,000 square feet

Visitors (2015): 6.9 million

Background

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History is the most visited natural history museum in the world. Opened in 1910, the museum, located on the National Mall, is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world's most extensive collection of natural history specimens and human artifacts. It fosters significant scientific research, and produces educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists to the public. The formal title for Dr. Kirk Johnson is *Sant Director*, in recognition of an endowed gift from the philanthropists, Roger and Vicki Sant.

Research and Staff

Museum personnel includes Smithsonian scientists; collaborating research associates and fellows; and a professional team of educators, exhibition developers, collections managers, designers, information specialists, building managers, administrators, security and support personnel.

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 current topics, 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.

In 2015, the scientific staff conducted research in 67 countries, published 827 scientific papers and seven books. During this year NMNH scientists contributed to the discovery and description of 3 new families, 56 new genera and 454 new species.

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

Collections

The museum houses more than 145.3 million objects and specimens, making it the largest natural history collection in the world. 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 website (www.mnh.si.edu) provides access to departmental databases, online exhibitions and up-to-date information about museum programs.

Permanent Exhibitions

- 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 that present important research in mineral chemistry and physics; plate tectonics, seismology and the study of volcanoes; and planetary science.
- The [David H. Koch Hall of Human Origins](#) exhibition focuses on the epic story of how the human species evolved over 6 million years, adapting and surviving during an era of dramatic climate change, and features more than 285 early-human fossils and artifacts, lifelike full-size reconstructions of several hominid species and 23 interactive experiences, including a morphing station where visitors can see what they would look like as early humans.
- The [Sant Ocean Hall](#), featuring male and female giant squids and an exact replica of a living North Atlantic right whale, is a one-of-a-kind interpretive exhibition that demonstrates how the ocean is intrinsically connected to other global systems and the daily lives of people around the world.
- [Butterflies + Plants: Partners in Evolution](#) innovatively combines a traditional exhibition with experiential learning provided by the Butterfly Pavilion. It gives visitors a rare, up-close look at living butterfly and plant specimens that demonstrate how they have evolved and diversified together for millions of years.
- [Eternal Life in Ancient Egypt](#) showcases more mummies than have been on display at any time in the museum's history. The exhibition combines rare artifacts and cutting-edge research tools to illuminate how Smithsonian scientists have pieced together the lives of ancient Egyptians through their burial practices and rituals in preparation for their eternal life.
- The [Kenneth E. Behring Family Hall of Mammals](#) tells the story of mammal evolution across 225 million years, with more than 274 specimens on permanent display. Designed with families in mind, the hall includes four discovery zones with hands-on activities that help visitors explore an array of mammal adaptations and habitats around the world.
- The [dinosaur and fossil hall](#) is currently closed to the public as it undergoes the largest, most extensive exhibition renovation in the museum's history. The **David H. Koch Hall of Fossils: Deep Time** is slated to open in 2019. Dinosaurs will be on view at the museum through interim exhibitions and programs: [Last American Dinosaurs](#) tells the story of non-avian dinosaurs' final years in western North America; the [FossiLab](#), features a glass-enclosed lab that allows visitors to watch museum paleontologists and trained volunteers extract fossils from rock and make fossil casts and molds.
- 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.

- The [Bone Hall](#) represents the oldest exhibition in the National Museum of Natural History and features almost 300 vertebrate skeletons. It highlights the diversity and unity of every major group of vertebrates, supporting ideas of evolution and common ancestry. Visitors can now enjoy a completely different experience while visiting the “Bone Hall” by downloading the [Skin and Bones](#) mobile app. In the app, 13 different skeletons on display come to life through the advanced technologies of 3-D augmented reality and 3-D tracking. The app adds details to many of the specimens to show how they move or look in life or how their skeletons work.
- [African Voices](#) examines the diversity, dynamism and global influence of Africa’s peoples and cultures over time in the realms of family, work, community and the natural environment. It includes historical and contemporary objects from the museum’s collections and commissioned sculptures, textiles, and pottery. Video interactives and sound stations provide selections from contemporary interviews, literature, proverbs, prayers, folk tales, songs and oral epics.

Education and Outreach

The museum offers a variety of exciting educational programs and public events to connect people with nature and culture, and share what science tells us about the natural world and our place in it. Through educational programming, visitors can engage onsite and online with scientists, collection objects and research that happens in the lab and in the field.

Onsite programs throughout the museum foster dialogue through personal interactions with scientists, trained volunteers and other experts. A wide range of [public events](#) are offered for audiences of all ages, including films, lectures, ask-a-scientist, panel discussions, informal “drop-in” science-learning programs, participatory art-science activities and family festivals.

Interactive educational activities are offered in [Q?rius, The Coralyn W. Whitney Science Education Center](#), the museum’s innovative learning space for teens and their educators and families. The space inspires young visitors to explore their world through a scientific lens by directly interacting with scientists and more than 6,000 museum objects, including bones, minerals and fossils that are millions of years old. [Q?rius Jr.](#) is a separate learning environment that provides interactive programming to children ages 5–12 using a diverse array of museum specimens. Free school [programs](#) for K-12 student groups are available on weekday mornings by reservation.

The award-winning Youth Engagement through Science ([YES!](#)) summer internship experience provides an opportunity for high school students to work alongside Smithsonian experts, both inside laboratories and out in the field.

Online audiences can discover and share the museum’s scientific content via its websites, social media platforms and [Smithsonian Science How](#) live webcasts, which offer students online access to museum scientists through television-style programs.

About the Museum

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C., is the world’s most visited natural history museum and is open every day except Dec. 25 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with extended evening hours in the summer. It also houses the world’s largest collection of natural history specimens, which is managed by a research staff of more than 100 doctorate-level scientists. Learn more at www.mnh.si.edu or on the museum’s social media platforms, including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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