



Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

Dear BCoN,

I'm writing to express my support for the vision document, Extending U.S. Biodiversity Collections. This vision would allow us to fully leverage the great analytical power of the nation's biodiversity collections and the effort that has gone into digitizing them in recent years. We at the Encyclopedia of Life reach 500,000 of the curious public per month online. Our visitors already have access to occurrence maps, specimen images and morphometric traits derived from collections databases, and the content available to us now is just the tip of the iceberg.

Our nation's biodiversity collections are a huge untapped resource for our research and education audiences. Other sources, including citizen science and the academic literature, contribute also, but for most of the taxonomic breadth of Life on Earth, the only available data are collections data. The work described in the vision document, for structuring and enriching collections data and supporting interoperability with the rest of the datasphere, will fill in huge gaps in our present view of ecology and evolution. The effort required is significant, measured over a few decades, but this investment will allow us to leverage the efforts of all the biodiversity scientists who came before us these past several centuries.

Sincerely,

Jen Hammock

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