



SOCIETY *for the* STUDY of EVOLUTION

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Biodiversity Collections Alliance
c/o American Institute of Biological Sciences
1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 420
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Biodiversity Collections Network,

On behalf of the Society for the Study of Evolution, I am writing to enthusiastically endorse your recently released report: *Extending U.S. Biodiversity Collections to Promote Research and Education*. As your report outlines, the vast biodiversity specimens held in U.S. collections are an incredibly powerful resource for answering fundamental questions about the ecology and evolution of Earth's biota. Creating an integrated network of these specimens and their associated data is critical for addressing these questions, and requires coordinated effort and sustained support.

The Society for the Study of Evolution is an international organization dedicated to promoting the study of evolution and the integration of the various fields of science concerned with evolution. The Society includes members from of all fields of science concerned with evolution, including genetics, paleontology (vertebrate, invertebrate, plant), taxonomy (animal, plant), ecology, anthropology, and others. The recommendation in the BCoN report to build a network of extended specimen data would greatly facilitate the research and education goals of our members. The results of this effort would provide a critical resource for scientists investigating fundamental questions about how organisms develop, evolve, and interact with each other and the environment. It would also provide an important baseline for understanding how climate change and human activities affect individual organisms, populations, and ecosystems. We believe the goals and recommendations in this report are absolutely critical for improving access and usage of biodiversity specimens held by U.S. collections.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark D. Rausher
President, Society for the Study of Evolution