



## MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY

Collections of organisms and genetic resources that provide a tangible record and crucial means to understanding the origins, evolution, and conservation of biodiversity

The University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (UMMZ) serves as the nucleus for the study of animal diversity on campus, focusing on the evolutionary origins of the planet's animal species, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form. Initiated in 1837, the collections have grown over time as scientific expeditions by U-M biologists and many others have entrusted archival research materials, collected from every region of the world, to its care.

Museum collections provide the best record we have of life on earth, and their value continues to increase in a fast-changing world where most projections envisage profound ecological and faunal turnover by the end of the century. The UMMZ's mission is grounded in basic research—but it is also informed by such projections, applying its resources and expertise to track the scope of change in natural ecosystems through time and to train future leaders in biodiversity and conservation. Students and researchers derive inestimable benefits from being able to access the UMMZ collection to study first-hand the diversity of organisms from all habitats and regions of the world.

As part of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB), the UMMZ houses world-class collections that support a multi-faceted departmental research and teaching program. The collections are irreplaceable, many coming from locations, habitats, and ecosystems that subsequently have been drastically altered by human activity. They include representatives of extinct species and populations, which provide otherwise unavailable data for studying the effects of environmental change on the distributions, appearances, and genetic features of the world's animals. Undergraduate and graduate students have the opportunity to study these valuable resources by working alongside faculty who are among the leading scientists and scholars in their fields.

To continue its role as a center of scientific research, training, and public knowledge, the UMMZ must create opportunities for undergraduate students to gain experience in biodiversity collection development and, to attract the very best scholars, must support graduate students with their research. Gifts to bring in visiting experts and speakers, as well as to purchase cutting-edge equipment, will enable us to sustain our position as one of the nation's leading research museums.

## BIODIVERSITY EXPLORATION FUND

The Biodiversity Exploration Fund is a new initiative of our museums that furthers understanding of biodiversity through continued fieldwork, collections building, and collections-based research and publications. A fundamental mission of museums is to ensure they maintain a record of biodiversity and its changes through time. While maintaining and studying existing collections is an essential part of that work, ensuring that new collections are made and properly cataloged is equally essential. Likewise, properly communicating our growing knowledge of biodiversity and its changes through timely and accessible publication of new findings is also at the core of our mission. Gifts of all sizes are needed to make this work possible. A gift of \$1,500 could fund a domestic field collection trip, while \$5,000 might cover an international trip to collect the specimens needed to advance understanding.



**“The value of [UMMZ] to science and science communication is almost indescribable. As technology changes, we’re discovering ways to get new information out of [the specimens] to learn what the climate was back then and how things have changed over time. We also learn different methods of preserving these animals in the wild and how to save them.”**

*—Charlie Engelman, '14*

## GRADUATE STUDENT FIELD COLLECTION SPONSORSHIP

The UMMZ is proud of its record of attracting and training excellent graduate students who initiate and develop their own research programs. From its inception, the UMMZ has had a global frame of reference. A significant portion of its research and collection efforts are directed toward geographically distant faunas—a large fraction of them tropical—where most of the planet's biodiversity is concentrated. For their research to be successful, many of our graduate students must spend weeks or months in the field, becoming familiar with their study organisms, setting up long-term experiments, and sampling material for detailed analyses back in the laboratory and for installation in the UMMZ's collections. Some of our students blog about their fieldwork, including the sampling of mosquitos in Cameroon, howler monkeys in Mexico, colobus monkeys in Uganda, captive snails in the London Zoo, and wild snails in Oregon. Such world-class biodiversity research by graduate students is dependent on funding support of \$30,000 each year. Gifts of \$5,000 per student will enable them to travel to remote study sites, perform detailed experiments, and enrich our collections.

## UMMZ STRATEGIC FUND

Gifts of all sizes are helpful in addressing emergent issues and opportunities for the UMMZ and its museum program. In past years, such funds have been used to provide seed money for pilot projects by faculty-curators, purchase new equipment to enhance our educational and research activities and underwrite extraordinary UMMZ publications, such as the Fishes of the Greater Mekong System with Species List and Photographic Atlas.

## UNDERGRADUATE SUMMER ANIMAL DIVERSITY WEB ASSISTANTSHIPS

Biodiversity education is currently undergoing explosive online growth and one of the main players—The Animal Diversity Web—is based in the UMMZ. This award-winning site is an online searchable database of animal natural history, distribution and classification. In partnership with the U-M School of Education, the ADW has developed innovative approaches to teaching K-12 students about biodiversity, climate change, and how scientists think about the world. The ADW serves an exceptionally wide global audience and currently provides more than 1.5 million pages of content to more than 315,000 site visitors monthly, including primary and secondary school students. Many of our undergraduates are interested in both online education and biodiversity. A gift of \$20,000 would enable us to initiate a new program of summer assistantships for students to engage with our onsite ADW experts and develop expertise in site content and outreach activities. Gifts of \$5,000 would enable students who otherwise might not be able to forego paid summer employment to gain this important experience.

## WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the college's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

*for what's next ▶*

**Look to Michigan**

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