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# The Value of Museum Collections for Research and Society FREE

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# Abstract

Many museums and academic institutions maintain first-rate collections of biological materials, ranging from preserved whole organisms to DNA libraries and cell lines. These biological collections make innumerable contributions to science and society in areas as divergent as homeland security, public health and safety, monitoring of environmental change, and traditional taxonomy and systematics. Moreover, these collections save governments and taxpayers many millions of dollars each year by effectively guiding government spending, preventing catastrophic events in public health and safety, eliminating redundancy, and securing natural and agricultural resources. However, these contributions are widely underappreciated by the public and by policymakers, resulting in insufficient financial support for maintenance and improvement of biological collections.

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