



## Over the past 250 years,

scientists have collected more than one billion biological specimens. These specimens range from fungi to fish to fossils that are housed in more than 1,600 natural history collections across the United States.

**Biological collections may be one of our nation's least-known treasures – and among the most valuable sources of biodiversity information.** Scientists use biological specimens to study both ancient and newly evolved species, and to track changes in the distribution of life on Earth. This information is critical to the development of environmental, agricultural, economic and public health policies.



**NIBA Strategic Plan**  
[tinyurl.com/NIBAStrategicPlan](http://tinyurl.com/NIBAStrategicPlan)

**NIBA Implementation Plan**  
[tinyurl.com/NIBAIImplementationPlan](http://tinyurl.com/NIBAIImplementationPlan)

For more information:

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# iDigBio

Integrated Digitized Biocollections



[www.idigbio.org](http://www.idigbio.org)





## Who will use iDigBio, the national collections resource?

*Researchers, educators, government agencies, policy makers, businesses and the public*

Recognizing the significant value of biological collections, the scientific community has developed strategic and implementation plans for establishing a Network Integrated Biocollections Alliance (NIBA). The primary goals of NIBA are to document our nation's biodiversity resources and make that information available to all through the Internet.

The National Science Foundation has committed funds over the next 10 years to support the goals of NIBA through the Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections (ADBC) program. As of the third year (2013), the program has funded 150 institutions in all 50 states to digitize data on 67 million specimens.



### ***Funded projects include building databases to:***

- ***Examine short- and long-term changes in the environment***
- ***Facilitate species discovery and description***
- ***Examine relationships among plants and their insect pests, and how these relationships impact agriculture and cycles in natural ecosystems***

The national digitization effort is coordinated by **iDigBio**, based at the University of Florida and Florida State University. **iDigBio** is working to integrate all digitized information on biodiversity and make it accessible to researchers, educators, citizen scientists and other stakeholders.

Understanding the ecological and societal benefits of biodiversity to humans requires identification of species that provide specific ecosystem services, determination of the community structure that influences how species function, and assessment of key environmental factors influencing the provision of those services. Ready access to biological collections data will enhance the ability to accurately identify species, describe the relationships among species within ecosystems, and determine those environmental factors that impact the functioning of species and ecosystems as a whole. This information is key to solving pressing concerns we face today such as climate change, the spread of disease, agricultural pests, industrial accidents and wetland destruction.

