

Applications for Research and Outreach

iDigBio is engaging research and outreach communities to provide biodiversity collections data to new users and actively collaborates with software developers and projects to create new research tools. Research efforts focus on promoting and facilitating novel and traditional uses of data, linking collections data to data from other domains, documenting the use of digitized collections data, and maintaining a resource that tracks research outcomes and innovative discoveries resulting from the use of digitized information.

iDigBio's outreach fosters project awareness within the research and outreach communities, identifies new partners and users of collections data, and develops outreach resources and activities related to digitization and biodiversity. iDigBio engages with diverse downstream users at museums, festivals, universities, and schools. Citizen science is fostered through WeDigBio (Worldwide Engagement for Digitizing Biocollections), an annual event that engages participants in digitizing natural history collections.



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Integrated Digitized Biocollections (iDigBio), is the national coordinating center for the Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections (ADBC) program funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).

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Digitizing the Past and Present for the Future

Over the past 300 years, scientists have collected more than a billion specimens of organisms, making natural history collections the most complete record of life on Earth. Unfortunately, collections data are one of science’s best-kept secrets with the vast majority of information having been locked away with the specimens in cabinets—until now.

Natural history collections are actively digitizing their specimens - converting the information into electronic format - and sharing it online with researchers, educators, and the public. The availability of digital information greatly enhances the ability to conduct research on biodiversity and to address some of the most fundamental questions in biology: How are species distributed temporally, spatially, and ecologically? What is the history of life on Earth? What factors lead to speciation, dispersal, and extinction? What connections between biodiversity and ecosystems contribute to human welfare? From answers to these questions, the diversity of life on Earth, as well as the potentially profound societal and economic consequences of global change, can be better understood.

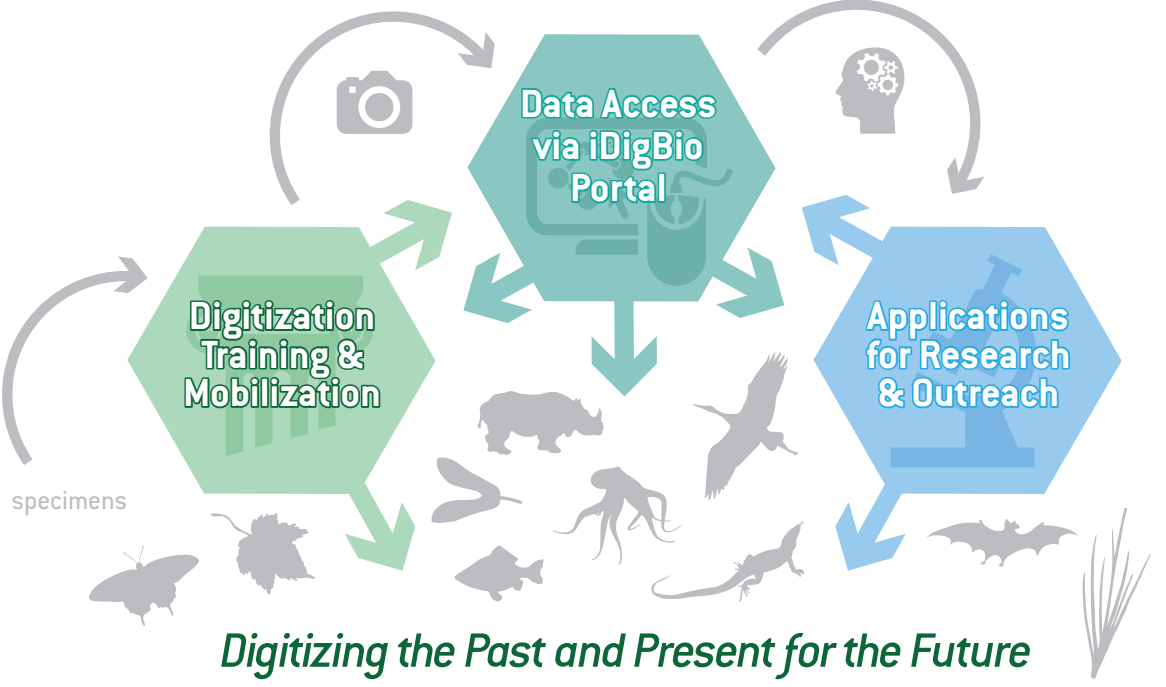
Integrated Digitized Biocollections (iDigBio) is the national coordinating center for the U.S. National Science Foundation’s Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections (ADBC) program. Digitization is supported by ADBC through Thematic Collections Networks (TCNs), groups of institutions that digitize specimen data to address a major research topic.

iDigBio supports Thematic Collections Networks and the larger collections community by providing digitization and workforce training, developing cyberinfrastructure to enable long-term preservation of data, and promoting novel and traditional uses of collections data in research, education, and outreach. To advance these efforts effectively, iDigBio engages globally with the collections, data standards, and research communities.

Digitization and Workforce Training

iDigBio facilitates digitization by convening workshops, symposia, hackathons, and webinars. Many of these activities are directed at improving digitization and biodiversity informatics techniques. Others offer direct training in digitization practices and informatics skills needed for the research data pipeline. Digitization topics include data transcription and imaging, digitization techniques by preparation type, georeferencing, project management, collections management, and citizen science. Biodiversity informatics resources include: Data Carpentry, Software Carpentry, Reproducible Science Curriculum, programming, and research across scientific disciplines. iDigBio has hosted hundreds of events and webinars.

To find out more about upcoming events visit www.idigbio.org/calendar



iDigBio Portal

The iDigBio specimen portal (www.idigbio.org/portal) provides access to more than 65 million records for neontological and paleontological specimens curated at museums and other institutions around the world. The portal enables researchers to address questions in several domains, including systematics, niche modeling, biological community interactions, trait evolution, ecosystem services, conservation biology, genetic variation, functional diversity, medicine, and agriculture.

