

PRESS RELEASE

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Museum leaders gather in Ottawa for meeting of Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada

OTTAWA – As the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity begins to wind down, leaders of Canada’s major natural history museums convene in Ottawa from October 25-27, 2010 for the seventh annual meeting of the Alliance of Natural History Museums of Canada (ANHMC). The network was created in 2003 to enhance collaborative work in the areas of research, collections development and education about the natural environment.

“International Biodiversity Year has presented a tremendous opportunity for us, as natural history museums, to develop activities and programs that enrich Canadians’ awareness of their natural environment and ways to protect it,” explains outgoing ANHMC President, Pauline Rafferty, CEO of the Royal British Columbia Museum. “In addition, we are continuing with a national strategy for developing a collection inventory that represents Canada’s biodiversity.”

A special reception will be held the evening of October 26 on Parliament Hill to present the fourth annual Bruce Naylor Award. It recognizes significant contributions to the museum-based study of natural history in Canada. The 2010 recipient is Dr. Wayne Maddison, an entomologist and Director of the Beaty Biodiversity Museum in Vancouver, B.C.

Numerous educational programs about biodiversity have been taking place at ANHMC member sites over the course of International Biodiversity Year. Some of the members underwent a “facelift”, and the results are being revealed this year (the Canadian Museum of Nature reopened its public exhibitions site on May 22 and the Biodôme in Montreal will reopen in December). For a complete list of member activities during International Biodiversity Year, visit www.naturalhistorymuseums.ca.

The ANHMC’s 16 members from west to north to east are: the Royal British Columbia Museum, Vancouver Aquarium, Royal Alberta Museum, Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage, Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Manitoba Museum, Royal Ontario Museum, Canadian Museum of Nature, Toronto Zoo, Montreal’s Nature Museums (Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Gardens and Planetarium), Redpath Museum (Montreal), New Brunswick Museum, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, and The Rooms Provincial Museum, Newfoundland and Labrador.

These institutions are responsible for preserving the record of Canada’s natural history through time. Together, member museums safeguard more than 19 million catalogued specimens of plants, animals, minerals and fossils collected over 150 years. The purpose of the national collections strategy is to ensure that this crucial record is complete and is preserved in perpetuity.

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