





A preschooler tries on butterfly wings at a metamorphosis activity during a special event at the Museum sponsored by the PNC Foundation's Grow Up Great with Science initiative.

mission:

To excite and inform people about the natural world through exploration and discovery.

vision:

One where all parents and teachers in the region consider the Delaware Museum of Natural History as an essential element in every child's development.

purpose:

To help develop a caring society that respects and values our planet.

For nearly four decades, the Delaware Museum of Natural History has served the community as an educational resource about nature and science. Schoolchildren expand on their classroom lessons with engaging tours while encountering animal specimens. Families visit the galleries year-round to experience continually changing special exhibits and events. Researchers examine the vast scientific collections as they explore variation among species. Even artists are drawn to the Museum's naturalistic displays as sources of inspiration.


The Museum proudly opens the doors to our classrooms, galleries, and collection cabinets in fulfillment of our mission to excite and inform people about the natural world through exploration and discovery. Scouts, teachers, homeschoolers, scientists, and children who love to ask, "What's that?" find the Museum to be a wonderful place to nurture curiosity about wildlife and the environment. Our goal is to make the Museum accessible to as many people as possible, especially in difficult economic times. By partnering with sponsors and donors, we offer

affordable admission and membership, special free days, and waived entry for disadvantaged students.

Together with a dedicated, service-minded corps of volunteers, we strive to support the community's interests in everything we do. Following are highlights from the Museum's many activities throughout 2010.



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collections and research

The Collections and Research Division provides public access to millions of natural history specimens catalogued and maintained on-site. Curators loan specimens to researchers and museums around the world, share information through online databases, and display taxidermy animals for local artists — among the endless other possibilities for the collections' use. The more than 2 million mollusk and 119,000 bird specimens cared for at the Museum represent a valuable record of species diversity for scientific comparison today and inquiries yet to be initiated in the future.

In 2010, scientific activity included academic meetings, scholarly publications, and research in the field. At the joint annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union and Cooper Ornithological Society in February, Curator of Birds Jean Woods, Ph.D., presented innovations of the Delaware Breeding Bird Atlas. She served as a team leader with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control's Delaware Shorebird Project in May, conducting research on migratory shorebirds stopping over in the Delaware Bay. As part of the ORNIS online bird specimen database, Jean coordinated the integration of georeferences for more than 15,000 localities and 38,000 individual



Curator of Birds Jean Woods, Ph.D., holds a Ruddy Turnstone during field research of shorebirds at Delaware Bay.

specimens into the Museum's database. In the Mollusk Department, Curator of Mollusks Elizabeth Shea, Ph.D., received a Census of Seamounts grant to support GIS-based mapping activities of cephalopods at Bear Seamount. She contributed to the Census of Marine Life Gulf of Maine Area project by co-authoring a paper on the biodiversity of deep-sea habitats in *PLoS ONE*. Liz was the lead author on a publication about newly hatched squids in the *Journal of Marine Science*, and she returned to the Gully Marine Protected Area in March to survey the deep-water

biodiversity with an international team of scientists. Daily adventures were shared with the Museum community through Facebook.

College students gained practical experience related to their majors at the Museum in 2010, while also maintaining and improving access to the collections. In partnership with the University of Delaware, business students upgraded the library's card catalogue system with new software and a computer database as part of their project management course. Summer



“I think the research floor is absolutely amazing. I find anything to do with birds to be fascinating, and it makes me feel good to help.”

– Ginny Schiavelli, Collections and Research Library volunteer



Artist Robert Horan viewed one of the Museum's Northern Shoveler specimens before creating his stained glass panel.



Bird lover and volunteer Ginny Schiavelli displays rare ornithology books stored at the Museum.

interns devised a method for sharing data and images associated with the mollusk type collection through the online photo-sharing website Picasa. Other interns broadened their biology studies with real-world applications as they helped reconcile duplicate records, sort shells, wash bones, and complete other collections management tasks.

Collections staff and volunteers managed specimen loans to researchers and institutions worldwide. Shells loaned to the American Museum of Natural History returned to the

Museum following a seven-year tour to Japan, Australia, United Arab Emirates, and other locales with the *Pearls* traveling exhibit. A variety of bird feathers were provided to the authors of a unique field guide, *Bird Feathers of North America*. Participants in the annual Mid-Atlantic Malacology conference at the Museum examined the mollusk collection as part of the daylong event.

Researchers and students were not the only ones to utilize the collections in 2010. Stained glass artist Robert Horan

was referred to the Museum by arts enthusiast Frolic Weymouth to examine duck specimens before creating a Northern Shoveler panel for display at the Waterfowl Festival in Easton, Maryland. Jane Kavanagh Morton viewed various spiral shells before she crafted a series of sculptures to exhibit in her studio. Even curious nature lovers who dropped by to identify a seed pod or animal bone were assisted by Museum staff in their search for knowledge.

exhibits

An exciting new permanent exhibit and engaging temporary displays enlivened the galleries in 2010 and captured the varied interests of visitors returning the year through.

The Nature Nook opened in October with interactive activities that build upon young children's fascination with animals. Housed in the former Discovery Room, which required upgrades after years of heavy use, this permanent exhibit was specially designed for children ages 2 through 10 to learn about nature and science using their senses and simple tools. Trained educators, docents, and volunteers facilitate educational interactions between children and their parents as an important component of early childhood learning.

Nature Nook highlights include a larger-than-life eagle's nest for dramatic play with realistic puppets. Live reptiles and amphibians on display are handled by educators to give visitors up-close looks. Inside the cave, special lighting reveals unique creatures and examples of archaeological discoveries. The stream table provides role-play opportunities using miniature animals as children discover waterways as vital habitats. Vivid wall murals by wildlife artist Dan Gotel create an outdoor atmosphere with airy nature scenes. The Nature Nook was supported by generous contributions from Dr. and Mrs. Louis Rafetto, Dr. and Mrs. Ray Rafetto, the Ederic Foundation, and three anonymous donors.

Appealing to an older audience, sculptor Stan Smokler exhibited metal works inspired by the sea when *Steel Currents* opened in June. The artist's welded steel sculptures represented abstractions of a horseshoe crab, lobster, seaweed, nautilus, and other marine life. Each piece was accompanied by Stan's artistic interpretations and those of Curator of Mollusks Elizabeth Shea, Ph.D., a specialist in the biodiversity of deep-sea cephalopods. Former Delaware Art Museum Executive Director Stephen Bruni provided additional commentary. The opening reception was part of the City of Wilmington's monthly Art Loop and attracted students from the Delaware College of Art and Design, where Stan is on the faculty.

Special exhibits on national tour highlighted diverse aspects of natural history in 2010, courtesy of presenting sponsor DuPont. Leeches, mosquitoes, and other parasites invaded the Museum during *Attack of the Bloodsuckers!*, which explored the world of sanguivores through family-friendly activities and live animal displays. Summer visitors spent time hanging out in the trees at the special exhibit *Tree Houses* and learned how animal bodies are adapted to arboreal habitats, what kinds of animal clues to look and listen for in the woods, and how people use trees for their homes. *Be the Dinosaur: Life in the Cretaceous* exposed the world from a dinosaur's perspective in a hands-on exhibit that brought prehistoric animals to life through interactive digital simulation.





The interactive Nature Nook opened in October for hands-on learning about animals and habitats.



Special exhibits included *Attack of the Bloodsuckers!* (above left), *Be the Dinosaur: Life in the Cretaceous* (above right), and *Tree Houses* in 2010.



2010 BY THE NUMBERS:

77,638 VISITORS

11,526 PARTICIPATED IN OFF-SITE PROGRAMS

10,814 TOOK SCHOOL TOURS

6,074 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS



Sculptures by Stan Smokler took inspiration from nature in the *Steel Currents* exhibit.

education



Preschool children watch a slug race and ask questions during a special event supported by the PNC Foundation's Grow Up Great with Science program.

The Museum's Education Division serves teachers, community groups, and other organizations as a valuable resource about nature and science. School programs meet Delaware State Science Standards to complement teaching in the classroom while exploring themes that include habitats, adaptations, biodiversity, and fossils. Summer and holiday camps, scout and homeschool programs, preschool-style classes, birthday parties, and special events round out comprehensive educational offerings for youth in the region.

The Museum's partnership with the PNC Foundation's Grow



Up Great with Science initiative proved successful after its first year based on an outside evaluation of participating preschools. A two-year, \$248,000 grant facilitated training on how to incorporate simple scientific observation and learning skills into various early childhood curriculum areas including language, mathematics, and creative arts. Preschool teachers received materials, activities, and science theme boxes to support their existing curricula. The program was implemented at

The Ministry of Caring Inc., Newark Day Nursery, New Castle County Head Start, and Latin American Community Center, which serve children from low- to moderate-income families. In reviewing the program's initial 2009-2010 school year, an independent evaluation concluded that the Museum's project had a measurable positive impact on teachers' practices in the classroom, the classroom environment, use of resources, and quality of science lesson plans. A dramatic improvement was also reported in teachers' confidence, skills, knowledge, and supports related to early science. At the beginning of the second year in the fall of 2010, the program

“I really like biology and the sciences, so since the Delaware Museum of Natural History helps kids learn about science, it’s a lot of fun for me to help teach them.”

– Ashish Streatfield, 10th grader at Unionville High School



Discovery Corps volunteer Ashish Streatfield teaches a young visitor about George Washington Carver as he creates a peanut craft during *African-American Champions of Nature* in January.

expanded to include statewide teacher training offerings with the University of Delaware, and materials developed by the Museum now serve as a model for Delaware preschool educators in delivering science lessons.

Educators responded to dynamic community needs throughout the year. When school groups were not able to travel to the Museum, educators traveled to them through outreach programs with portable specimens and presentations. Underprivileged schoolchildren from low-income families were offered one free tour and outreach program, courtesy of donors to the Education Fund. Museum educators reacted

to the wishes of the homeschool community by doubling the number of classes offered per school year and adding features like online homework. The successful Scout Program broadened to encompass Boy Scouts with targeted badge workshops. When the new Delaware Children’s Museum opened in April, the Museum furnished a Critter Cart on Saturdays with live animals for children to ask questions about and examine.

Student volunteers and new partnerships supported the Museum’s educational initiatives. The Discovery Corps, composed of high school students committed to completing community service, expanded in size

and scope. In 2010, most of the Museum’s special events, especially those on weekends and during school breaks, relied on these specially trained volunteers to help families make crafts and complete natural history activities. In April, educators developed a new special event exposing visitors to the burgeoning scientific field of nanotechnology: *Nano Day*. The event was part of a nationwide festival of educational programs about nanoscale science and engineering and its potential impact on the future, made possible by the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network and the National Science Foundation.

communications and development

Informing the general public and potential supporters about the Museum's many activities and facilitating community participation in those endeavors are important components of the institution's success. Communications and Development staff coordinated efforts to accomplish those goals.

In partnership with the Brandywine Museums and Gardens Alliance, the Museum participated in the Brandywine Valley Open House by offering free admission for more than 3,500 visitors for one day in January. The Museum also engaged in the Alliance's Brandywine Treasure Trail Passport over the summer, providing a cost-effective way for culture lovers to experience multiple attractions at a deeply discounted price. *Artisans' Bank August Dollar Tuesdays*, *PNC Free Sunday Mornings*, and other promotions also encouraged visitation for families that might otherwise not be able to afford admission.

The Museum broadened access to needy families by participating in the National Endowment for the Arts' Blue Star Museums initiative, allowing active military personnel and their immediate family free admission during the summer. Once the program ended, the Museum enhanced its half-price policy for military personnel to free admission. The Museum also provides complimentary admission for disabled individuals through organizations such as Easter Seals and Community Interactions.

The fourth annual *Wine & Dinosaurs presented by Wilmington Trust* raised nearly \$40,000 to fund Museum operations, widening the circle of friends to include new silent auction donors, ticket buyers, and volunteers. Returning sponsors Wilmington Trust, Proctor Heyman LLP, Weymouth, Swayze, & Corroon Insurance, Inc.,

"I love being a part of Wine & Dinosaurs. It is neat seeing everyone come out and support the Museum and have a great time doing it."

– Laurie Thackrah, a Wine & Dinosaurs volunteer



Volunteers Laurie Thackrah and Rakia Taylor at the fourth annual *Wine & Dinosaurs presented by Wilmington Trust*.

NEIL, Cover and Rossiter, United Distributors, McClafferty Printing Co., and Fastsigns provided critical backing, while catering partners Gallagher & Gallagher, Toscana Catering, The Greenery Caterers, Bixby's Caterers, Sugarfoot Fine Foods, and Montrachet Fine Foods contributed food and service for the event. Donors and bidders increased silent auction proceeds by 40 percent and dedicated volunteers and staff made sure the event ran smoothly.

Support from Museum members and Annual Fund donors was substantial, important, and deeply appreciated. The Museum's base of support increased again this year, and although we cannot list every gift, the following pages contain the names of those who made Annual Fund gifts, provided sponsorships, awarded grants, and supported special initiatives at the \$100 level and above in 2010.

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John E. du Pont
1938-2010

John Eleuthère du Pont founded the Delaware Museum of Natural History in 1957 as the first institution in Delaware dedicated to the study and interpretation of natural history. He built significant collections of bird and shell specimens that serve as a rich source of material for scientific research. His legacy in opening the Museum to the public in 1972 supports nature and science education in the Brandywine Valley for generations to come.



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