



CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

It's been  
a year.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are deeply grateful for your unwavering support of the Academy. The museum was closed for nearly a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, causing heartache and uncertainty for our community and staff. Your ongoing commitment to science and environmental learning made all the difference. At a time of isolation and anxiety, you helped us reach even more people around the world with interactive virtual programming, awe-inspiring stories, and science-based information to stay safe.

With the museum shuttered to the public, Academy staff and leadership continued developing our new purpose-driven mission **to regenerate the natural world through science, learning, and collaboration**. I am extremely proud of our new **strategic plan, vision and values**, and major initiatives: **Thriving California, Hope for Reefs (Phase II)**, and **Islands 2030**. Thanks to your partnership, together we are launching a bold new chapter in the Academy's 168-year story. At this pivotal moment, we are poised to play an important role in the growing movement to halt climate warming and transform ecological degeneration to regeneration.

We recognize that efforts to address the global ecological crisis cannot be successful

unless they also advance social justice. In May, Academy staff embarked on a series of workshops and other activities focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. This work, led by **The Mosaic Collaborative**, is vital to the Academy's work culture and the many communities we serve.

Moving forward, we will continue to seek opportunities for more diverse and inclusive participation in STEM training and leadership through programs like Science Action Club, Careers in Science, Summer Systematics Institute, and a new STEM Leadership Cohort. In addition to supporting all of this work, your investments drove a 58% increase in new users accessing our free educational materials for K-12 science teaching during the pandemic—keeping teachers, families, and children engaged and connected.

Thank you for all that you do to keep the Academy and our communities strong!

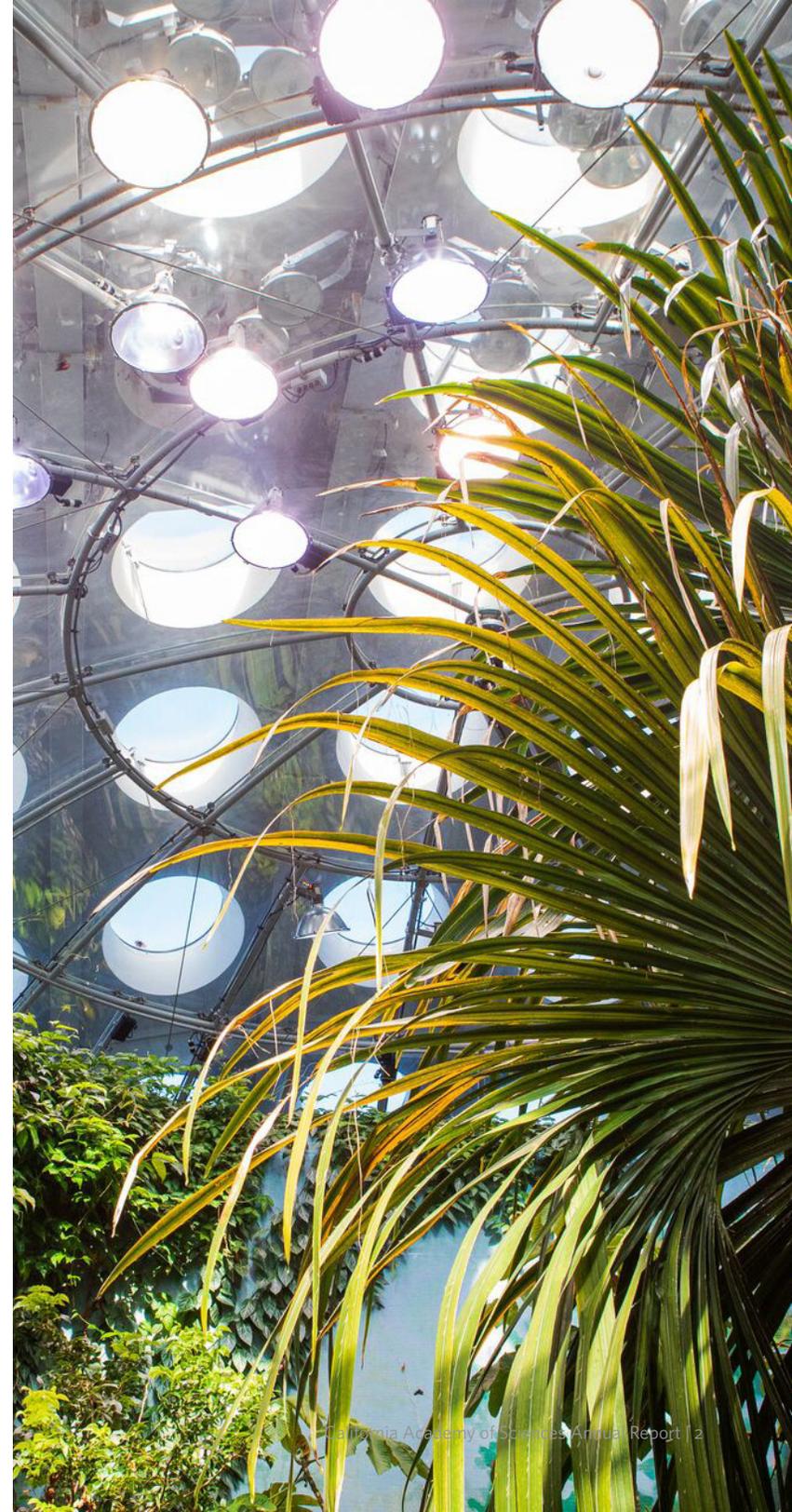
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Sampson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Sampson".

**Scott Sampson, PhD**

*Executive Director*

*William R. and Gretchen B. Kimball Chair*





## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



During a year like no other, I am humbled by the incredible level of commitment from our donor communities,

including the **Friends Circle, Leadership Circle, Director's Circle, Institutional Partners,** and **Eastwood Associates.** Please accept a heartfelt thank you from our leadership team, Board of Trustees, and Academy staff. Your support inspired us to think bigger and move faster, even in a time of unparalleled crisis and uncertainty.

Due to an almost year-long closure, the Academy lost \$11 million in earned revenue and faced staggering financial challenges. At the start of the fiscal year, 75% of employees were impacted by furloughs, salary reductions, or layoffs. But, through a combination of federal stimulus funding, strong donor support, and aggressive cost-cutting measures, we were ultimately able to emerge from this unprecedented crisis. I am proud to say that today the Academy is on solid financial footing, and we could not have done it without you. Thank you.

Looking ahead, we are energized by our new purpose-driven mission and major initiatives—spanning the globe from California to tropical islands and coral reefs.

Through collaborative work with a variety of stakeholders, we aim to translate our leading biodiversity research into practical solutions with positive impacts on human and ecological communities. We will share groundbreaking science, hopeful stories, and transformational partnerships with millions of museum visitors and through our robust global digital channels to inspire care and advocacy for the natural world.

As I begin my tenure as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I am honored and excited. I'd like to extend gratitude to my predecessor, Liebe Patterson, a long-time Academy champion. Thanks also to departing Trustees Matt Barger, Huifen Chan, Gretchen Daily, Troy Daniels, Bill Duhamel, Naureen Hassan, Sal Khan, Janet Lamkin, and Hal Mooney for your service to the Academy.

The Academy continues to thrive thanks to the many people who are deeply committed to our beloved institution. Thank you for being a vital part of our community!

Sincerely,

**Dan Janney**  
*Chair of the Board of Trustees*



# A year of change

**Last year**, with students, teachers, and families struggling to navigate remote learning, Academy staff, scientists, and educators rallied around innovative ways to engage our communities. We curated lesson plans for K-12 at-home learning; launched **Science @ Home** activity packs for kids ages 4-11; connected **Rock Program** classes via Zoom; and streamed **Morrison Planetarium** and **Steinhart Aquarium** public programs multiple times a week. We moved youth programs and teacher training online,

including **Careers in Science**, **Science Action Club**, **Teacher Professional Development**, and **#TeenScienceNight**.

At the museum, Academy biologists and engineers provided care and enrichment for 40,000 animals and kept our world-class facilities running smoothly. Meanwhile, our scientists and global partners shared their research and the wonders of the natural world with communities near and far through new virtual offerings like **Breakfast Club**, **NightSchool**, and the **Genomic Social Hour**.

It was a year like no other, and we made it through because of you. Thank you.

## September 15

**Sarah Jacobs, PhD**, was appointed as assistant curator of botany and Howell Chair of Western North American Botany.



With the Academy closed to the public since March 13, staff, leadership, and the Board of Trustees worked to define our new **mission, vision and values**, and **major initiatives**.

MUSEUM CLOSED

# July

# August

# September

## September 24

To advance our **Breakfast Before Conservation** program, we broke ground on a new cricket farm facility in Madagascar. With a planned opening in fall 2021, our goal is to provide healthy protein to half a million people annually, many of them children, while regenerating forests using cricket manure.



September 26

Morrison Planetarium's Visualization Studio launched *Big Astronomy* with a virtual premiere and weekly live broadcasts totalling over 7,000 views on YouTube. *Big Astronomy* won the Public Choice Award in the 2021 STEM For All Video Showcase, Best Science Film at the Dome Fest West 2021, and the Best Astronomy Education Award at the Dome Under Fulldome Festival in Melbourne, Australia.



October



October 23

The Academy reopened after seven months, showcasing the new exhibits *Venom* and *BigPicture*, which featured 49 stunning nature images selected from 6,400 submissions by photographers representing 65 countries.



### November 29

After just five weeks open, the Academy closed to the public in compliance with local and state COVID-19 health and safety mandates.



### December 9

We added **213 new plant and animal species** to the tree of life, thanks to research carried out by two dozen Academy scientists and global partners.

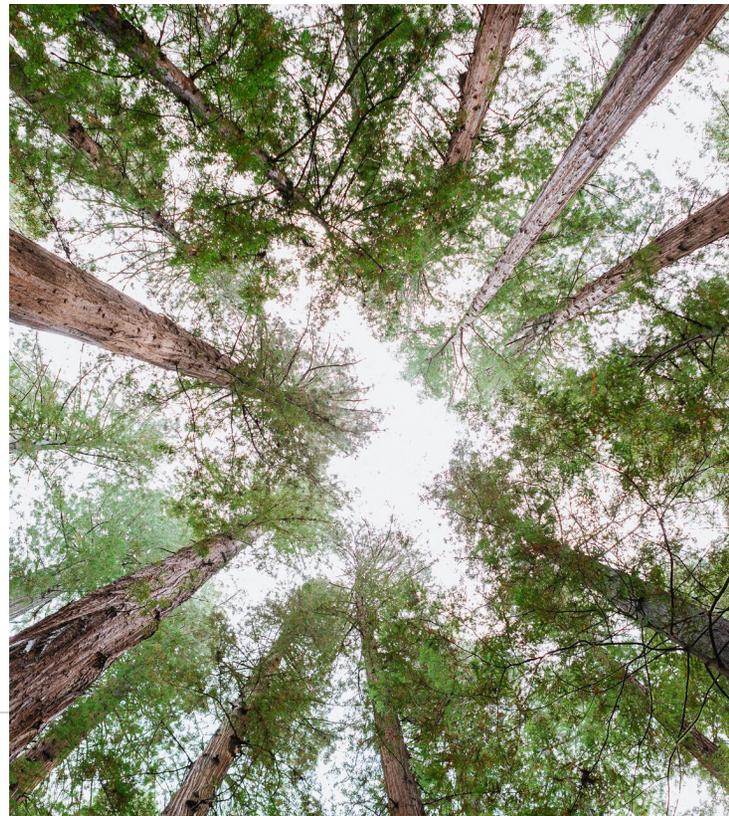
MUSEUM CLOSED

## November

## December

### November 10

The Academy joined a new **coalition of organizations**, the **California Biodiversity Network**, to protect California's world-renowned natural heritage and support the development and implementation of conservation actions across the state.

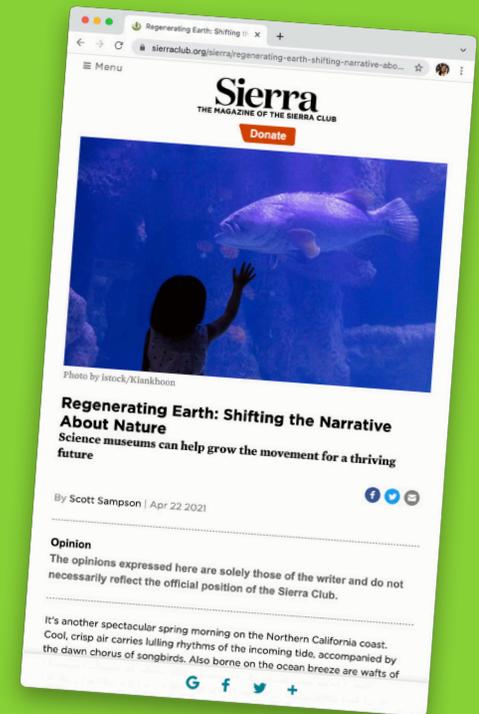


### December 15

**Science @ Home** themed activity packs launched online, to keep kids ages 4-11 connected to science learning through guided videos, hands-on crafts, and real experiments.

“For us, **regeneration** is all **about healing** the web of life—rebuilding the diversity, complexity, and resilience of ecosystems so that they can withstand climate change and other disturbances.”

—Academy Executive Director Dr. Scott Sampson





### February 14

**Penguin Valentines** reminded us of the power of love and strategic conservation partnerships by highlighting pairing as part of the AZA **Species Survival Plan** to protect endangered African penguins.



### March 15

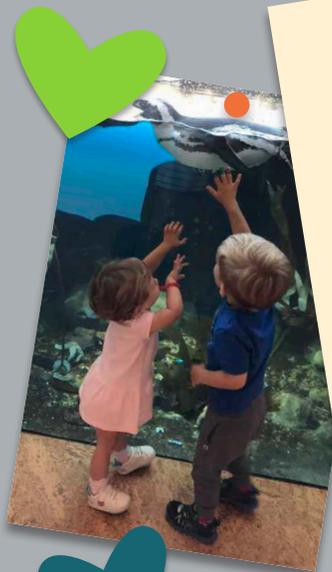
One year after our initial closing, the Academy **reopened** to visitors, continuing to adhere to strict health and safety guidelines to protect our community and staff.



## January

## February

## March



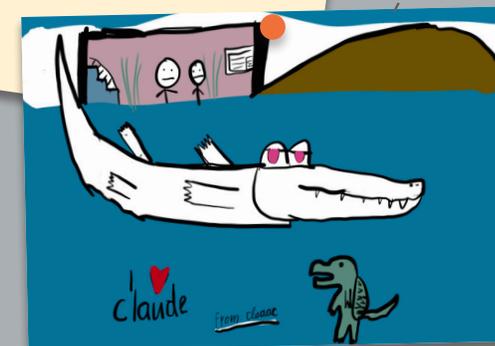
Dear Penguins,  
We miss seeing you at the Academy and following you while you swim and dive and play in your tank, going to and fro. In fact, you helped us learn to walk this way. We are bigger now but we hope to exchange new tricks with you soon!

Much love, The Breinlingers

Dear Claude,  
I love you Claude, you're the best. I drew you this picture of you.  
Isaac Lee

Animal Caregivers,  
Thank you sooo much for taking care of the wonderful animals at the Academy during closure! It is comforting to know that our penguin friends are in your care.

Xoxo, An Academy Friend





### April 22

At our virtual fundraiser, **Spring Forward: A Science Soiree**, Executive Director Dr. Scott Sampson announced the Academy's new purpose-driven **mission, strategic plan**, and **major initiatives**.



### May 10

**City Nature Challenge** (April 30-May 3) results were announced, breaking records with more than 1.27 million wildlife observations in one weekend! Upwards of 52,000 community scientists around the world contributed valuable biodiversity data using **iNaturalist**.

## April

## May

### May 1

Fourteen youth interns planned and produced a virtual **#TeenScienceNight**, attended by 144 youth representing all 9 Bay Area counties, 13 states, and 8 countries.



### May 28

**Sharks** exhibit opened, showcasing one of the oldest and most successful predators on Earth. With global shark populations in steep decline, Academy scientists are working to protect these fascinating creatures and their habitats through research, advocacy, and our **Hope for Reefs** initiative.



June 23

The Student Education team won a highly competitive **2021 Superintendent's Award for Excellence in Museum Education for School Programs**, jointly awarded by the California Association of Museums and the California Department of Education.



June



June 24

**New Science** exhibit debuted, featuring first-person stories highlighting the significant contributions of LGBTQ+ women and gender minorities of color working in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine).

# By the numbers

# 6,381,053

views of online learning materials  
(15% increase from FY20)



# 2.5 million

square meters of California lands surveyed for wildfire impacts on birds, plants, and vegetation



11 undergraduate interns were selected from more than 500 applicants to participate in the nine-week **Summer Systematics Institute** intensive training and mentorship program

# 515,386

Distance Learning participants  
(1560% increase from FY20)



# 567

livestream programs delivered

# 700+

teachers participated in virtual **Teacher Professional Development** workshops, collectively reaching 134,000 students with science and environmental learning

5,088

youth served through  
afterschool programs  
and internships

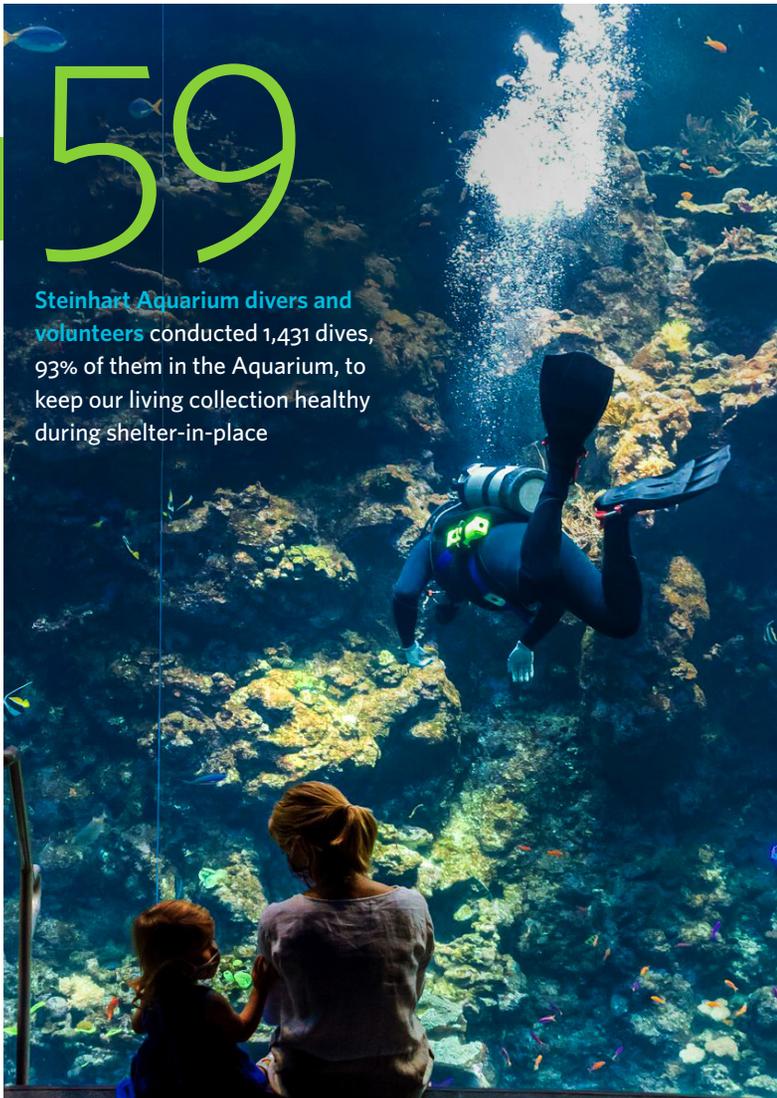


50 million

global observations of wild plants and animals marked a milestone for **iNaturalist**, the world's most popular biodiversity monitoring app, powered by the Academy and National Geographic Society

59

**Steinhart Aquarium divers and volunteers** conducted 1,431 dives, 93% of them in the Aquarium, to keep our living collection healthy during shelter-in-place



34

local youth interns engaged in science learning and workforce development through our **Careers in Science** program



4,049

community scientists made 39,435 observations of 3,760 species on **iNaturalist** during **Snapshot Cal Coast**

198

**Science Action Clubs** supported 24 adult trainers and 2,400 youth, with 107 clubs in California, 82 nationwide, and 9 in Spain

# Thank you



Your generous contributions provide access, opportunities, and inspiration for future generations of scientists and environmental advocates. Your support funds the science we do today to create a better tomorrow.

We'd like to thank the many donors in our community who keep the Academy thriving. Whether you belong to our **Friends Circle, Leadership Circle, Director's Circle, Institutional Partners, Eastwood Associates**, or made one of 5,000 online donations—thank you!

It is our pleasure to recognize and thank the following individuals for their generous support during a daunting year: William J. Michaely and Jancy Rickman for an exceptionally meaningful gift, reflecting their dedication to science education and research; the W. Richard Bingham Family, who anticipated a critical shift to providing expanded digital

content to keep communities connected remotely; and Kevin and Julia Hartz, Dan Janney and Noelle Montgomery, Rebecca and Alfred Lin, the Elizabeth R. & William J. Patterson Foundation, and Nick and Susie Simon for visionary early support of our new strategic initiatives.

We would like to express our appreciation of Joan Steinberg and Emeritus Trustee George Montgomery, long-time Academy volunteers, for their generous estate gifts. And we thank Andre and Kathryn Dermant, whose lifelong commitment to science and field research inspired their legacy gift to support the Academy's work on marine

mammal protection, forest fire resilience, and California botanical research.

Thank you to everyone who joined our lively **Spring Forward: A Science Soiree** online event in April. You helped to raise just over \$1 million to fund Academy programs driving conservation solutions in California and globally. Your generosity allowed us to offer free tickets to anyone wanting to attend. A very special thank you to our amazing lead sponsors: Autodesk for Spring Forward and Carmel Partners for the Spring Forward Afterparty. We can't wait to celebrate science again with you soon!

# Financials

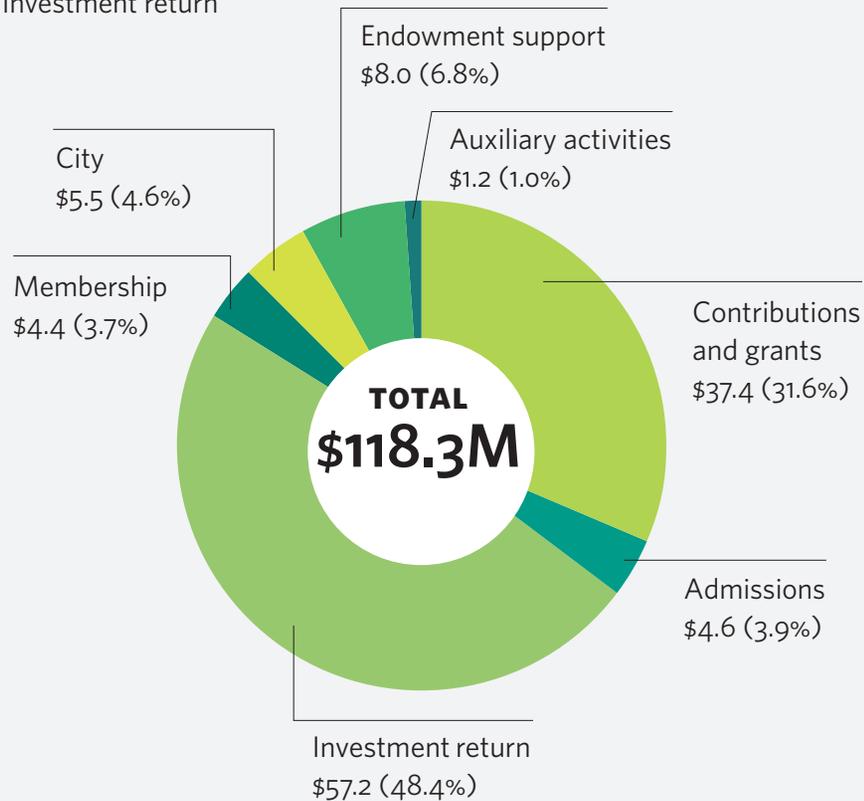
## FY21 REVENUE MIX

\$ IN MILLIONS

This is an excerpt from the Statement of Activity.

These revenue items include transactions with and without donor restrictions:

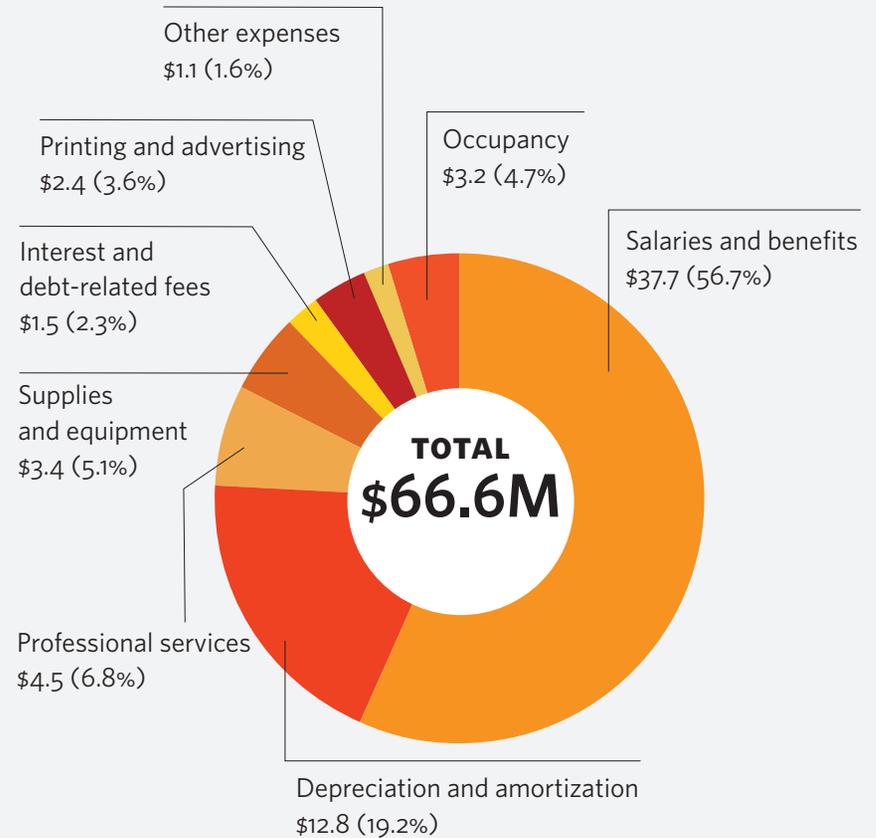
- » Contributions and grants
- » Investment return



## FY21 EXPENSE MIX

\$ IN MILLIONS

This is an excerpt from the Statement of Activity.





# Thank you.

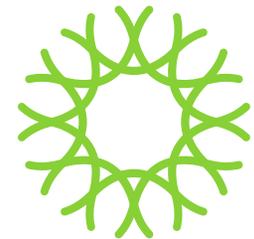
In our fast-changing world, your philanthropic partnership is helping to inspire solutions to today's biggest challenges and provide resources to support the next generation of environmental advocates and scientific leaders.

Thank you for your vital role in the success of our mission to regenerate the natural world through science, learning, and collaboration.

WRITING: Megan Lardner

DESIGN: Maya P. Lim

PHOTOGRAPHY: California Academy of Sciences Visualization Studio, Brian Fisher, Terry Goslinger, Tim Griffith, Rebecca Johnson, Leah Kalish, Durrell Kapan, Gayle Laird, Molly Michelson, Kathryn Whitney



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