American Museum of Natural History



Fiscal Year 2026

Report on General Operations | July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026

Visitors in the David S. and Ruth L. Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth

Fiscal Year 2026

At the American Museum of Natural History, we brought together people of all ages and diverse backgrounds this year to share in the wonder of science and the joy of discovery. Children stood beneath the iconic Blue Whale and encountered *Tyrannosaurus rex* for the first time. New Yorkers gathered for milestone celebrations and civic moments, from FIFA World Cup 2026™ events to early voting. Visitors from across all 50 U.S. states and from countries around the world explored our historic exhibition halls. From our immersive *Invisible Worlds* experience to the multimedia exhibition *Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs*, the Museum offered incredible opportunities to explore life on Earth and our universe within four city blocks.

The Museum also shared scientific discoveries with the world. Our scientists pursued groundbreaking, globally relevant research on the origins of life, human cultures, and the cosmos, drawing on our unparalleled scientific collections amassed over more than 150 years. We brought scientific knowledge beyond the Museum's walls into New York City classrooms, lively neighborhood celebrations, far-reaching scholarly publications, and traveling exhibitions that reached audiences worldwide.

General operating support for the American Museum of Natural History meets our most urgent and fundamental needs and advances our mission to discover, interpret, and disseminate—through scientific research and education—knowledge about human cultures, the natural world, and the universe.

This report highlights discovery and learning made possible with gifts of general operating support.

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Exhibitions and the Visitor Experience

Scientific Research

From global expeditions to on-site laboratories, Museum scientists pursued discoveries that will deepen our understanding of life on Earth, human cultures, and the universe. They drew on world-class collections, advanced imaging tools, molecular laboratories, and leading technologies at the Museum.

Select Highlights from Our Research Divisions

Anthropology

Assistant Curator of South American Ethnology **John Bunce** published a study in Royal Society Open Science that challenges longstanding assumptions about how and why humans grow at the rate we do.

Michelle Young, Assistant Curator of South American Archaeology | Joined August 2025
Researches pre-Hispanic material culture of Indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Andes
Since 2019, Michelle Young has directed the Cinnabar Roads Project, a study of ancient exchange routes.

Invertebrate Zoology

Curator of Conservation Science and Jaffe Chief Conservation Scientist **Jesse Barber** spent several weeks at the Southwestern Research Station launching a new research program on light pollution. His research examines how artificial nighttime light disrupts the long-evolving predator-prey relationship between bats and moths, revealing how quickly ecosystems change in a human-altered world.

Paleontology

A paper by Macaulay Curator **Roger Benson** in *Nature* described a remarkable new fossil lizard from 167 million years ago with skull and tooth features strikingly convergent with those of snakes. The discovery sheds light on one of science's longstanding puzzles: the anatomical origins of the snake body plan and the evolutionary transitions that gave rise to it.

Scott Evans, Assistant Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology | Joined August 2025
Researches the Ediacara Biota, a group of organisms that lived in Earth's oceans 575–541 million years ago
In this video, Scott Evans takes us back in time to decode the mysteries of the Ediacaran Era—a time 550 million years ago when marine organisms made a pivotal shift from microscopic life to complex, mobile animals.

Physical Sciences

Curator of Earth and Planetary Sciences **Nathalie Goodkin** and Richard Gilder Graduate School Ph.D. candidate **Rosabelle Ong** co-authored a paper in Nature Geoscience that advances efforts to predict large-scale *Sargassum* algae blooms in the Caribbean Sea, a phenomenon with significant ecological and economic consequences for coastal communities.

Jackie Faherty, Associate Curator of Astrophysics | Appointed July 2025
Researches low-mass stars, brown dwarfs, and exoplanets
Watch Jackie Faherty explain why everything in the universe has been in constant motion since the Big Bang.

Vertebrate Zoology

A study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* led by **Audrey Lin**, a former Gerstner Postdoctoral Scholar, and researchers at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, found that most modern dogs carry small traces of wolf ancestry from ancient crossbreeding events. Analyzing more than 2,700 genomes, the team discovered that wolf genes may have helped shape modern dogs' size and their ability to live alongside humans.



Senior Museum Specialist Ruth Salas (seated) and Curator Jessica Ware, chair of the Division of Invertebrate Zoology, collaborate on a digitization project

Field Notes from Fiscal Year 2026

A New Generation of Scientists

The Richard Gilder Graduate School at the American Museum of Natural History awarded five Ph.D.s in 2025, while graduates and alumni earned major honors and advanced to positions at leading institutions including Suffolk University and Midwestern University.

Tomorrow's Conservation Leaders

The Center for Biodiversity and Conservation's Marshall M. Weinberg Student Conference on Conservation Science drew 400+ applications from students in 47 countries, connecting early-career researchers with mentorship and opportunities to share their work.

Extensive Archives

The David S. and Ruth L. Gottesman Research Library and Learning Center welcomed scholars researching everything from Pierre Belon's 1555 *The Natural History of Birds* to the art of illustrator Yukihiko (Shozaburo) Shimotori.

Cutting-edge Genomics Research

The Museum's Institute for Comparative Genomics advanced ancient biomolecules and modern genomics research through partnerships with New York State and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, completing a study on wildlife forensics and continuing research on 3,000-year-old environmental DNA found on Egyptian mummies.

170+
scientists
conducting breakthrough research at the Museum

5
research divisions
Anthropology, Invertebrate Zoology, Vertebrate Zoology, Physical Sciences, and Paleontology

66,300+
visitors to the Gottesman Research Library and Learning Center
across 247 open days to explore our archives, conduct research, visit an exhibition, or enjoy an unparalleled quiet space

Collections

Our scientific collections are among the most important in the world, providing an invaluable record of 4.5 billion years of change in Earth's geology and climate, the 3.5-billion-year history of life on Earth, and the remarkable achievements of human cultures. This year, the Museum continued to care for and digitize more than 30 million specimens and objects while partnering with Indigenous communities to return human remains and cultural items.

Field Notes from Fiscal Year 2026

Conserving the Elephant and Bovid Collections

With support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Museum's Department of Science Conservation and Department of Mammalogy partnered to preserve, rehouse, and reunify two historically significant collections: the African and Asian elephant skull collection (one of the largest elephant collections in the United States, with approximately 80 specimens collected during early 20th-century expeditions) and the African bovid skeletal collection. By relocating the specimens to climate-controlled storage, creating custom archival mounts and enclosures, and reunifying skulls with their postcranial skeletal elements, the project will ensure their long-term preservation while enabling scientists to study complete skeletons in a single location.

Collections Unlock New Discoveries

This fiscal year, the Museum discovered multiple species completely new to science, including a new genus of crinoid from Anticosti Island, four species of sap fly in amber from the Dominican Republic, and a squirrel-sized animal that lived during the early Jurassic. Some of these findings were the result of modern collecting expeditions that brought Museum scientists around the world. Others were uncovered by revisiting specimens preserved in the Museum's collections for decades, awaiting new technologies and fresh scientific insight. This highlights the critical importance of scientific collections in fueling new discoveries.

Return of the CHamoru Ancestral Remains to Guam

On March 6, 2026, the Museum welcomed Guam State Historic Preservation Officer Patrick Lujan and a CHamoru delegation to complete the repatriation of four CHamoru Ancestors. A ceremony at the Museum marked the culmination of collaborative work between the Museum, the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum, and the Guam State Historic Preservation Office.



Conservator Julia Sybalsky and Assistant Conservator Devon Lee behind the scenes in the elephant and bovid collections



Fafa'nå'gue Heidi Chargualaf-Quenga addresses Indigenous representatives from the surrounding area and Museum staff at the Central Park West entrance of the Museum as part of the To Ask Permission protocol to enter a space. Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum Director Fran Lujan (front right), Guam State Historic Preservation Officer Patrick Lujan (back right), and delegation members participate.

30 million+

specimens and objects

in the Museum's scientific collections

Public Programs

The Museum's public programs invite people to share ideas, ask questions, and build community around science.

A Selection of Public Programs from Fiscal Year 2026

July

As the Sun set during Manhattanhenge, Associate Curator of Astrophysics Jackie Faherty explored the history and astronomy behind this striking natural phenomenon.

September

For Climate Week, we hosted a day-long, Museum-wide festival featuring activities exploring science and sustainability, along with events for students, educators, and more.

December

Evolution on Trial: 100 Years After Scopes was a panel event marking the anniversary of the case that shaped our contemporary understanding of scientific evidence and religion in public education.

March

For our annual Isaac Asimov Memorial Debate, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Frederick P. Rose Director of the Hayden Planetarium, led a panel examining AI's relationship with science, geopolitical power, and human agency.



January

A sold-out crowd of more than 1,500 spent the evening at Grains of Change, a celebration of rice in East Asia with scientific lectures, culinary tastings, games, and mochi pounding demonstrations.

April

"Radiolab" host Latif Nasser led an exciting game revealing the true stories behind objects in our scientific collections, followed by music and conversations with local organizations about climate action.

May

The three-day Margaret Mead Film Festival presented storytelling and documentary films from diverse voices and perspectives from around the world.

June

At our monthly SciCafe, George Washington University assistant professor Xindi Hu and postdoctoral associate Jahred Liddie explored chemical contamination in water systems and its unequal impacts on health and local ecosystems.



48,000+

attendees at public programs

ranging from family fun at EarthFest to the annual Isaac Asimov Memorial Debate moderated by Neil deGrasse Tyson

38

events

ranging from festive cultural celebrations to moderated scientific panels



Signature Experiences

Our signature experiences offer ways to connect deeply with the joys of science and discovery.

In October, after a five-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum re-launched our popular monthly sleepovers. Featuring flashlight tours, hands-on activities, scavenger hunts, and more, A Night at the Museum: The Overnight Experience inspires wonder for kids ages 6–12 and their chaperones. Children have the chance to discover the Museum after dark before drifting off to sleep underneath Irma and Paul Milstein Family Hall of Ocean Life's iconic Blue Whale.

Education

The Museum's wide range of educational opportunities inspired curiosity and engaged learners of all ages throughout Fiscal Year 2026, inviting them to explore the practices and principles of science.



Beyond Elementary Explorations in Science students in the Susan and Peter J. Solomon Family Insectarium.

Field Notes from Fiscal Year 2026

First-of-its-kind STEM2CITY Career Fair

The Museum connected 400+ young people ages 16–24 with public-service career opportunities through partnerships with 15+ New York City agencies and the City Council.

Science Education Research

Museum experts published studies on science education topics ranging from helping teachers center on equity to tools for introducing students to species distribution models.

Citywide Hackathon

The Museum hosted a special weekend in January, bringing together scientists, technologists, designers, policymakers, and community members to develop data-driven climate solutions.

Partnerships for Scale

The Museum grew networks dedicated to science learning: we hosted the first-ever OpenSpace (an open-source software project co-developed with Linköping University) user meeting in July 2025, as well as an NYC Science Research and Mentoring Consortium event in June, which connected 100+ youth researchers with STEM opportunities.



Lang Science Program students making discoveries

Opportunities to Learn at Every Age

This year's slate of education programs engaged children, families, students, and educators from across New York City and beyond, advancing science literacy and learning. Registration options and eligibility are available through the links below.

Early Adventures
Pre-K children and family
Science learning for our youngest adventurers

Science Investigations Summer Program
Grades K–5
A week-long deep dive into science topics

Urban Advantage
Grades 1–8 from NYC
The nation's largest formalized middle school science program

Science Alliance
Grades 6–12
Invaluable hands-on experience through standalone science courses

Science Communication Internship Program
Grade 10 from NYC
A paid internship focused on career readiness

Museum Education Experience Program
NYC College Students
A paid internship to explore science, education, and other Museum fields

Science and Nature
Grades K–5 children and family
Teaching the foundations of scientific inquiry at the Museum

Field Trips
Grades K–12
Offering free general admission for NYC groups and unique experiences like Seeds to Stories

Beyond Elementary Explorations in Science
Grades 3–5 from NYC
A week-long "school in a museum" program

Lang Science Program
Grades 7–12
Continuous discovery through years of hands-on, inquiry-based learning

Science Research Mentoring Program
Grades 10–11
Year-long paid internship conducting research under the mentorship of a scientist

Master of Arts in Teaching
Educators
A one-of-a-kind Earth Science teaching residency based in the Richard Gilder Graduate School

Additional Series for Educators:

Scientist Speaker Series, Educators' Evenings, Seminars on Science, and other unique opportunities like our Climate Education in Action event (In Fiscal Year 2026, we brought together educators, policymakers, and other leaders to discuss climate literacy, featuring keynote speaker Katharine Hayhoe.)

274,000+
Museum visitors from school and camp groups
NYC-based field trip groups receive free general admission, plus entry to a ticketed exhibition

2,900+
teachers received professional development support

82,000+
teachers and students reached through Urban Advantage
Our hallmark education partnership with the NYC Department of Education and other science-rich institutions across New York City

1,200+
participants in children, family, and youth programs
exploring exciting subjects like astrophysics, biology, zoology, and science communication outside of school hours

Exhibitions
and the Visitor Experience

This year, our exhibitions highlighted a broad range of scientific topics within engaging experiences that visitors could explore, learn from, and interact with through striking visuals and immersive design.

Opened and Closed in Fiscal Year 2026



Opened November

Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs

The Museum opened *Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs*, an exhibition exploring the asteroid impact 66 million years ago that reshaped life on Earth. The exhibition features life-size models, including a 27-foot mosasaur, along with fossils, dramatic dioramas, an immersive theater experience, and interactive displays revealing the science behind this important event.



Opened May

For the Win: Objects of Sports Excellence

Ahead of New York's FIFA World Cup 2026™ matches, the Museum introduced a slate of interactive experiences, including on-site watch parties, exploring the science, culture, and shared experience of athletic competition we called *World Cup, World Cultures*. Our exhibition in the Keith and Melissa Meister Gallery, *For the Win: Objects of Sports Excellence,* featured Jesse Owens's 1936 Olympic gold medal, a 2024 WNBA Championship ring from New York Liberty star Breanna Stewart, and other remarkable sports objects.

- Closed August — *The Secret World of Elephants*
- Opened September — *Black in Natural History Museums*
- Opened November; Closed January — *The Origami Holiday Tree*
- Closed January — *Cosmic Splendor: Jewelry from the Collections of Van Cleef & Arpels*
- Closed January — *Life at the Limits: Nature's Superheroes*
- Opened February — *Eyes on the Universe: Images from Space Telescopes*
- Opened April — *Fossils of the Flaming Cliffs*
- Opened May — *Goal Zone (Part of World Cup, World Cultures)*

"Each diorama, each exhibit, each planetarium show captures your attention, gets you to observe, then hopefully provokes a question — and in that way, each starts the visitor on the pathway toward becoming a scientist."

Sean Decatur, President of the American Museum of Natural History
A quote from the 2025 Richard Gilder Graduate School Commencement

4.1 million+
visitors to the Museum

4.7 million+
visitors experienced traveling exhibitions and Space Shows
at host institutions everywhere from California to Australia

Our Evolving Exhibition Halls

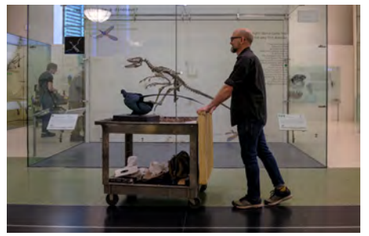
The Museum continually refreshes its permanent halls with updates to exhibits, visuals, interpretation, and storytelling. These changes reflect new research, incorporate new perspectives, and create fresh ways for visitors to engage with the collections and content.



Apex, an 11-foot-tall *Stegosaurus* fossil, moved to the Gilder Center's fourth floor, where visitors experience this incredible specimen up close through new interpretive panels and touchable elements.



Climate Week inspired the transformation of eight familiar Museum dioramas with bold, temporary decals highlighting the impacts of climate change on ecosystems and biodiversity.



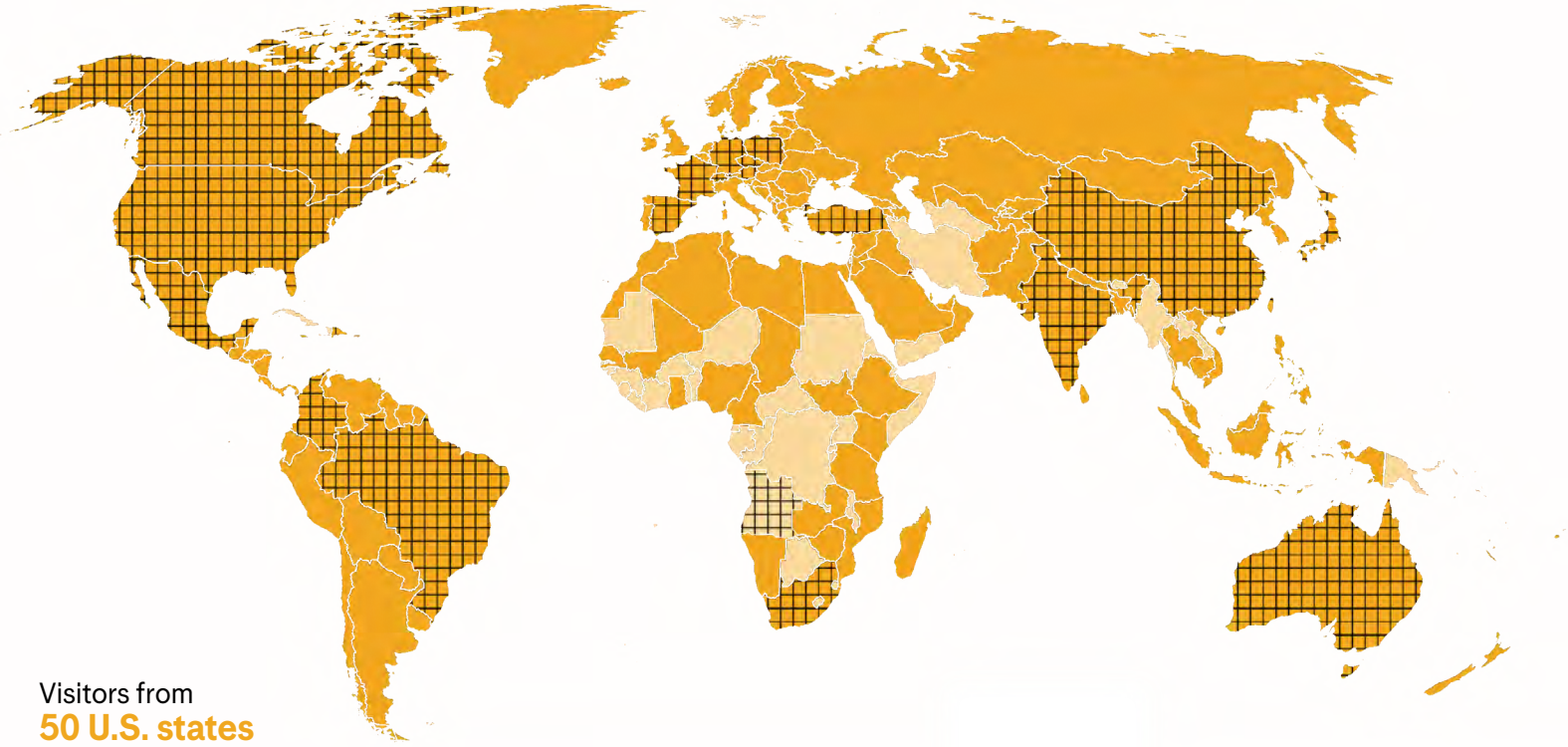
The Museum's fifth model of *Microraptor gui* debuted in May. Created by preparator Jason Brougham in collaboration with the late Curator Emeritus of Paleontology Mark Norell, the model incorporates new evidence about this species, with iridescent plumage, paired tail plumes, and lips.

Hands-on Learning

This fiscal year, the Museum opened the Climate Learning Lab, dedicated to climate science, expanding opportunities for children to "drop in" and explore scientific topics through hands-on activities with experts. Together with the Discovery Room and Human Origins Learning Lab, these three spaces welcomed more than 126,000 visitors this year. Museum educators also created new hands-on activities as part of *World Cup, World Cultures*, exploring how the traits that make sports possible evolved in humans.

Local Impact, Global Reach

In Fiscal Year 2026, the Museum connected New York to the world—and the world to New York—through the wonder of science and the joy of discovery.



Visitors from
50 U.S. states
and 140+ countries

Exhibitions and Space Shows traveled to host institutions across
23 countries

Ticket sales country of origin

Traveling Exhibitions

Thank You

The Museum's work is made possible by people: scientists pursuing new discoveries, educators engaging students, volunteers sharing their time, staff contributing their expertise, and supporters like you who make it all happen. Thank you for being integral to the Museum's success this fiscal year.

For more information, visit **amnh.org**.



During the NYC Department of Transportation's Summer Streets events, we met hundreds of New Yorkers, bringing hands-on science activities to our neighbors!

Photos: Alvaro Keding and Daniel Kim/© American Museum of Natural History