



# Collaborate

July 1, 2022– June 30, 2023

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
ANNUAL REPORT

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



At this pivotal moment in our planet's history, the California Academy of Sciences has redefined itself

around a purpose-based mission: to regenerate the natural world through science, learning, and collaboration. This work is rooted in a trio of regeneration initiatives: *Hope for Reefs*, *Islands 2030*, and *Thriving California*. I'm thrilled to share that in collaboration with our partners, we're making great strides in all three. Here are just a few recent highlights:

*Thriving California* received **\$2.1 million in state funding** to expand its educational offerings, including launching a new teen environmental action leadership program. The initiative was also awarded a **\$2.4 million grant to digitize approximately 1 million botany specimens**. We have begun the process of raising sunflower sea stars, a vital species in kelp forests that has largely disappeared from the California coast. We have joined with more than 30 San Francisco-based organizations to form a collaborative urban nature alliance, called **Reimagining San Francisco**, aimed at catalyzing vibrant, integrated communities where people and nature flourish.

The *Islands 2030* team visited Saba and St. Martin in the Lesser Antilles, collaborating with local partners to conduct biodiversity surveys and inform the co-creation of new educational materials showcasing native species. They also piloted field trips for 150 secondary school students, conducted a teacher workshop, and hosted a remarkable gathering of educators, government officials, and local NGOs to advance discussions around creating new protected areas. In Madagascar, our new cricket farm—a research and production facility aimed at farming crickets as a vital protein source for humans—was brought online.

Meanwhile, the *Hope for Reefs* team has been excited to return to field research, including trips to the Maldives, the Philippines, and Roatán. I had the great privilege of joining the team on a diving expedition in the Maldives. It's one thing to hear about the incredible deep-diving work of our Academy scientists, and another altogether to witness them at work in the field. I was impressed by the way the team is collaborating with Maldivian scientists and government representatives to work toward a thriving future for corals in this reef-rich tropical country.

Another important milestone this year was our continued partnership with Momentum Collaborative, an organizational change management firm focused on **anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)**. We completed a major phase of our DEIA journey, but we still have more critical work to do, both within the Academy and beyond. We are deeply committed to working collaboratively with communities that have been systematically oppressed, as well as pursuing more diverse and inclusive participation in STEM, **amplifying voices** that have been excluded for too long.

I would like to wholeheartedly thank the entire Academy community—staff, students, volunteers, members, donors, Trustees, and supporters—for making this year's accomplishments possible. I could not be more excited about where we're headed as an organization. Please know that we deeply appreciate you being part of this impactful journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Sampson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Scott D. Sampson, PhD**  
Executive Director  
*William R. and Gretchen B. Kimball Chair*





## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

“I am incredibly proud of our Academy staff for their hard work. Without their contributions, we would not be where we are today—leading efforts to regenerate Earth’s critical ecosystems and addressing climate change.”



Thank you to our incredible community

of supporters for your ongoing partnership with the Academy. I remain inspired by the unwavering commitment from our donor communities, including the **Friends Circle**, **Leadership Circle**, **Director’s Circle**, **Institutional Partners**, and **Eastwood Associates**. Your support has allowed us to do incredible work, both inside the museum and beyond.

We’re grateful to all those who contributed to **Big Bang | Islands 2030**, the Academy’s annual fundraising gala. With your generous contributions, we raised over \$2 million in support of our mission and the **Islands 2030** initiative. I would like to personally thank our lead sponsors:

Presenting Sponsor Autodesk and Party After Dark Presenting Sponsor Carmel Partners. I’d also like to thank our event co-chairs, Kevin and Julia Hartz; event corporate chair, Janet Lamkin of United Airlines; and keynote speaker **Dr. Hilda C. Heine**, former president of the Marshall Islands, for an inspiring evening.

In June 2023, we were thrilled to welcome our millionth daytime visitor of the fiscal year, marking the first time since the pandemic that annual attendance surpassed 1 million. Thanks to the support of our longtime, loyal members and many new ones, our membership program rebounded to pre-pandemic levels as well.

I am incredibly proud of our Academy staff for their hard work. Without

their contributions, we would not be where we are today—leading efforts to regenerate Earth’s critical ecosystems and addressing climate change.

Because of our deeply committed donor and supporter community, the Academy continues to grow and inspire people every day. On behalf of the leadership team, Board of Trustees, and staff, thank you all for your support and for being an integral part of our community.

Sincerely,

**Dan Janney**

*Chair of the Board of Trustees*



# Highlights of the year

July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023



## July 6

The Academy was **awarded \$2.1 million in state funding**, secured by Senator Scott Wiener, to support the **Thriving California** Environmental Learning Plan (ELP). The ELP aims to close the science learning gap by providing families, communities, and K-12 students and teachers across California with the opportunity to understand and advocate on behalf of local nature.

# July

# August

## August 12

More than 1,800 teenagers from 226 schools attended **#TeenScienceNight**, planned for teens, by teens. Youth from across the Bay Area immersed themselves in the natural world at this free Academy youth takeover event, exploring science, music, art, and environmental justice.



## August 24

*bioGraphic's* short film, **Returning England's Forgotten Frog**, was chosen as an "official selection" for the 21st Wild and Scenic Film Festival.

September 15

As a part of the Academy's *Hope for Reefs* initiative, **Science Action Club** expanded its curriculum with a new unit focused on the connections between coral reefs, climate change, and communities. Youth from the Boys & Girls Club of San Francisco, Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, and Real Options for City Kids piloted activities from the new curriculum around how their everyday choices influence ocean health.



September

October

October 24

Academy scientists and research partners in the Philippines **unpacked the largely misunderstood evolutionary history of mimicry in Easter egg weevils**, empowering conservationists to better protect the genetic diversity of these charismatic beetles.



## October 25

As part of our *Islands 2030* initiative, we hosted our second community gathering in St. Martin, attended by educators, conservation managers, and government officials. The session focused on nature education and the introduction of biodiversity heatmaps to advance discussions around the creation of new protected areas within the island's last remaining pockets of natural habitat.



# October



## October 28

San Francisco's favorite Halloween event, *SuperNatural*, raised a record-breaking total of over \$300,000 in support of the Academy's mission, including environmental learning programs that engage more than 1.7 million youth, educators, and families each year.



## October 31

Since 2019, Academy researchers have collaborated with an international team of marine biologists to investigate the mysterious mass die-off of Pacific gray whales. Our involvement in the Marine Mammal Stranding Network was featured in the short film, *Washed Ashore*, produced by UC Berkeley journalism students and featured in the *Los Angeles Times*.

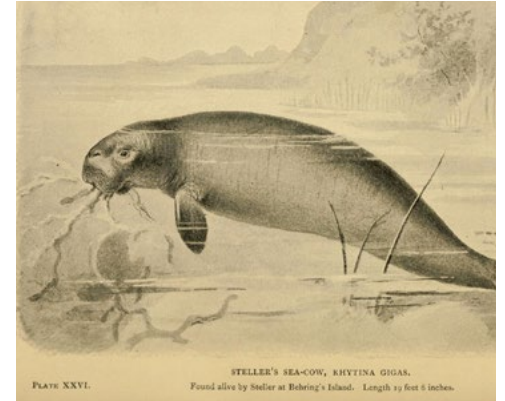
## November 14

Our in-house **Coral Regeneration Lab (CoRL)** had the most successful spawn to date. As part of our **Hope for Reefs** initiative, CoRL's research informs global coral restoration work, a critical piece of reversing the rapid decline of Earth's coral reefs and regenerating these vital ecosystems.



## November 28

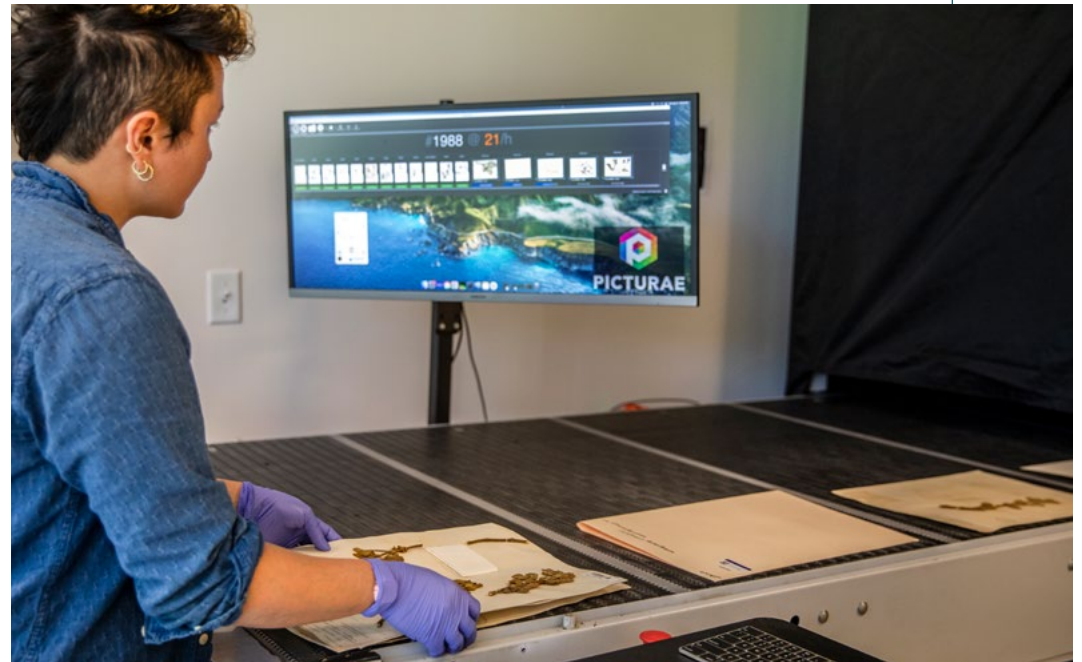
Have you heard of the Steller's sea cow? The four-ton marine mammal was a relative of the manatee that shaped kelp forests along the Pacific coast before it was driven to extinction in the 18th century. Thanks to a new modeling approach developed by Academy scientists under the **Thriving California** initiative, we can better understand **what these past forests may have looked like in the presence of the marine megaherbivore**—and how we can regenerate this critical ecosystem.



# November

## November 30

The Academy was awarded a **\$2.4 million grant to digitize approximately 1 million California botany specimens**. Awarded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, this grant supports the Academy's **Thriving California** initiative and is an important step toward making valuable collections data available to policymakers and conservationists.







## December

In two papers published in *Science*, Academy Curator of Entomology and Patterson Scholar, Brian Fisher, PhD, and collaborators from more than 50 global organizations have **undertaken a major review of Madagascar's extraordinary biodiversity**. The team evaluated the threats facing terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity and looked at future opportunities for conservation and regeneration.

# December

## December

We welcomed **two exciting new additions to our African penguin colony**: chicks Pogo and Oswald "Ozzie" Cobblepot. These two were the first chicks to hatch at the Academy since 2018, under the **Species Survival Plan** that sustains endangered African penguin populations worldwide.



## December

Wrapping up 2022, Academy researchers and scientists described **146 new animal, plant, and fungi species** this year, enriching our understanding of Earth's biodiversity and strengthening our ability to regenerate the natural world.



*Cirrhilabrus finifenmaa*



*Microlicia tetramera*



*Podarcis latastei*



*Ansonia karen*



*Evoplosoma nuku*

# January

## January 31

Academy Curator and Follett Chair of Ichthyology and Co-Director of *Hope for Reefs* Luiz Rocha, PhD, was elected as a 2022 Fellow of the **American Association for the Advancement of Science**. Dr. Rocha received the honor for his many contributions to the field of marine biology that have enriched our understanding of coral reef ecosystems. To learn more about *Hope for Reefs*, watch this [video](#).





## February 1

We were proud to host this year's Brain and Mind Lecture, sponsored by the Chen Institute. Guest speaker Dr. Indre Viskontas, neuroscientist and Osher Fellow, shared how our brains turn sensory perceptions into meaningful and moving experiences that motivate us to act in accordance with our values.

# February

## February 6

Academy visitors gained a new perspective of Africa with *Leo na Kesho (today and tomorrow)*, a new installation located in Tusher African Hall by Tanzanian-American multidisciplinary artist, educator, and Osher Fellow **Walter Kitundu**. The piece urges viewers to thoughtfully examine the presence of humanity as part of the continent's natural and social futures, and ignite curiosity to learn more about present-day natural and built environments in Africa.



**“Humans and the greater natural world face unparalleled challenges, but with science and regeneration at the heart of all we do, we can realize a healthy future for people and the planet.”**

—Scott D. Sampson, PhD

*Executive Director and William R. and Gretchen B. Kimball Chair*





### February 15

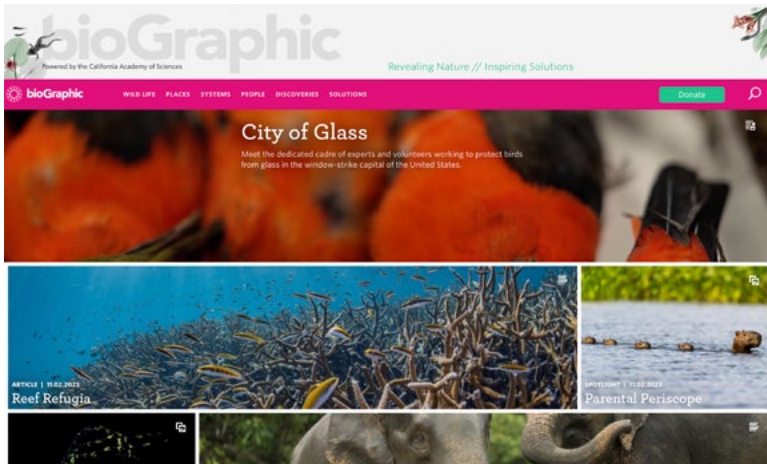
We welcomed two more penguin chicks—Ignatz and Lazola, which staff named in honor of Ignatz Steinhart and Zamokuhle Lazola. Steinhart made a generous donation in honor of his brother, Sigmund, which enabled the construction of Steinhart Aquarium. Zamokuhle Lazola is a seabird ranger who monitors and rescues penguins living on Bird Island Nature Reserve in South Africa, supporting the Academy's critical global [African penguin conservation work](#).

## February

### February 24

The Academy was named one of the **10 best science museums in the United States for 2023** in the *USA TODAY 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards*.





## March 2

**bioGraphic**, the Academy's independent online magazine about nature and regeneration, **took bronze at the Anthem Awards**, the largest and most comprehensive social impact awards.



## March 27

The Academy's **Careers in Science** program was recognized as a Warriors Community Foundation *Hoops 4 Kids* recipient, among eight other Bay Area organizations, all supporting underserved youth. For a closer look, watch this [video](#).

# March

## March 23

The Academy joined a global natural history initiative—**connecting over 1 billion objects in scientific collections** across 73 museums in 28 countries to build a ground-breaking database, helping scientists and decision makers find solutions to urgent issues such as climate change, food insecurity, human health, pandemic preparedness, and wildlife conservation.





**March 28**

An international research team composed of scientists affiliated with over a dozen institutions, including the Academy, **proposed a first-of-its-kind framework for governments worldwide to evaluate their preparedness for ocean acidification.**



### April 3

After a remarkably rainy winter, the spring sunshine brought superblooms to California's ecosystems. Learn the science behind these flowery phenomena in this [video](#), featuring Sarah Jacobs, PhD, Assistant Curator of Botany and the Howell Chair of Western North American Botany.



## April

### April 4

Happy 170th anniversary to us! Our inaugural **Academy Day** offered a festive day of philanthropy and fun, featuring pay-what-you-can admission, a science fair, live screen printing, prizes, and more. Academy Day raised over \$100,000 in support of the Academy's **mission** and programs.





## April 27

Thank you to everyone who contributed to **Big Bang | Islands 2030**! The Academy's annual gala raised over \$2 million in support of **Islands 2030** and our mission to regenerate the natural world. To learn more about **Islands 2030**, watch this [video](#).



# April

## April 28

As part of the Academy's **Thriving California** initiative, **City Nature Challenge 2023** broke records with more than 1.87 million wildlife observations in 482 cities across 46 countries. More than 66,000 community scientists contributed valuable biodiversity data using **iNaturalist**. Watch this inspiring [video](#) to see its impact.



# May



## May 16

In collaboration with the **Presidio Trust**, **Creekside Science**, and **Revive and Restore**, Academy researcher Durrell Kapan, PhD, led a team at Fort Ord Dunes State Park in Monterey on a **search for silvery blue butterflies—the closest living relative to the extinct Xerces Blue—as part of the dune restoration project.**



May 26

***The World's Largest Dinosaurs***

explores the amazing biology of the largest land animals that ever lived: the long-necked and long-tailed sauropods. This new exhibition draws on paleo-biological research to infer how this group of giants was able to thrive for approximately 140 million years.



# May

May 28

The Academy's collections staff proudly hosted the **annual meeting for the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections** (SPNHC). This remarkable six-day gathering attracted 500 in-person attendees from around the world.





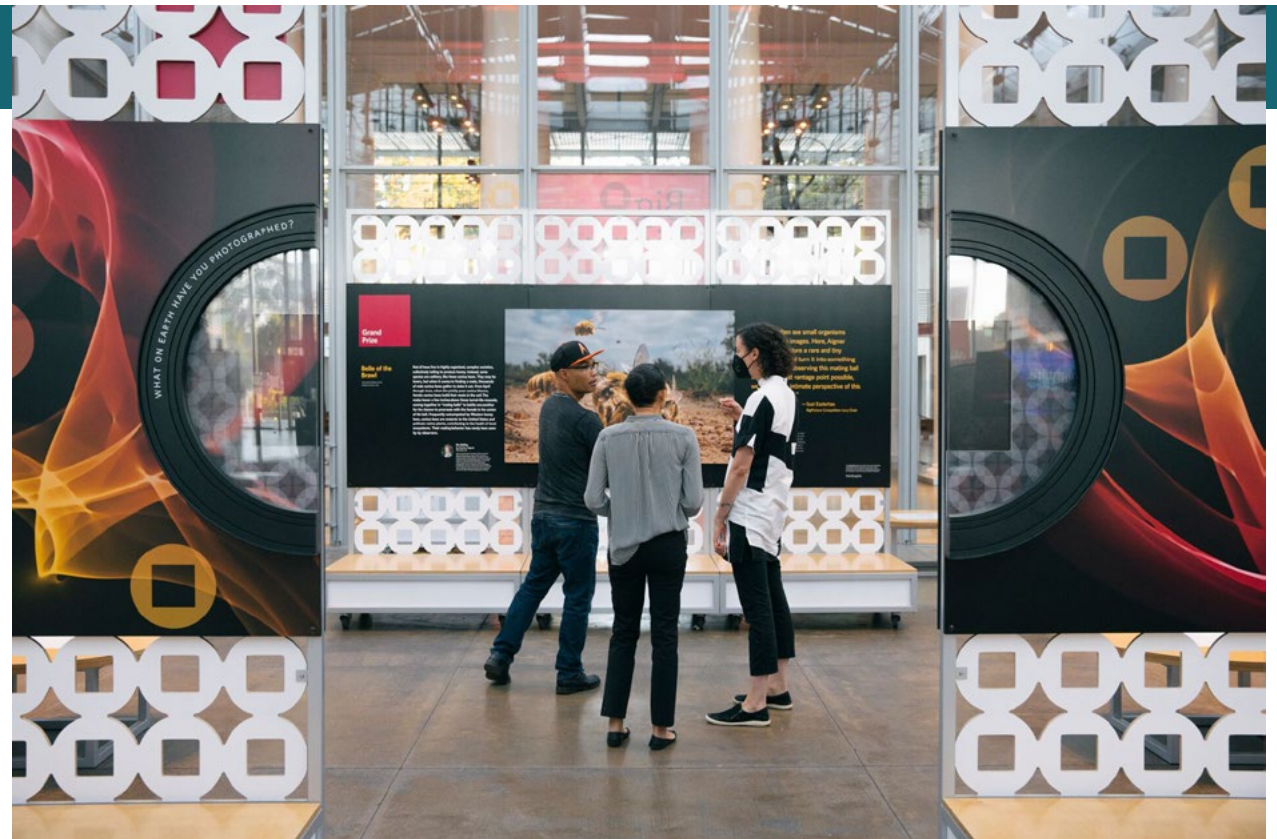
## June 1

The Academy launched an all-new **NightLife series**, ***Says Who?***, that took a critical look at storyteller privilege while creating a space to uplift previously overshadowed voices within science and beyond.

# June

## June 15

Our 10th annual **BigPicture: Natural World Photography Competition** brought **49 winning photographs** from a pool of more than 7,300 submissions representing 58 countries—with each image capturing the remarkable beauty and awe-inspiring splendor of the natural world.



# By the numbers

# 4,600,000

views of online learning materials



More than

# 442

Academy volunteers contributed

# 31,615

volunteer-hours



Nearly

# 800

specimens from the Academy's Galápagos collections—reptiles, birds, and mammals—were 3D-scanned under the [NSF-funded "GalapaGateway" digitization project](#) and made publicly accessible on multiple platforms including [Morphosource](#) and [Sketchfab](#)

# 105,435

students from schools nationwide participated in free, interactive [Distance Learning](#) livestreams

# 48

high school interns engaged in science learning and workforce development through [Careers in Science](#)



Nearly

# 20,000

historical records digitized through the [Invertebrate Zoology's DigIn Digitization](#) [TCN grant](#)

# 1,800,000

in-person engagements (50% increase from FY22 due to re-opening)

# 89,439

digital botany specimen images added to our internal database—76,600 publicly accessible via [GBIF](#) and [CCH2](#)



The Academy's living collection grew by 50 species and

# 9,253

individuals in FY23. Going into its centennial year, Steinhart Aquarium is home to nearly 60,000 live animals representing more than 1,000 species of plants and animals



Nearly  

# 16,000

students from San Francisco participated in free educator-led programs via the [Rock Fund](#)

More than  

# 102,500

guests from 1,020 schools across California attended the Academy on a field trip



Science Action Club engaged

# 3,938

youth and 350 educators through 174 environmental learning clubs—including 79 in California, 85 nationwide, and 10 abroad

Steinhart Aquarium divers and volunteers conducted

# 2,035

dives, 75% of them in the Aquarium





# Thank you

We are grateful to those who made generous contributions to the Academy from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Your support makes it possible for us to bring extraordinary opportunities and inspiration to our community both locally and beyond. A special thank you to our **Friends Circle**, **Leadership Circle**, **Director's Circle**, **Institutional Partners**, **Eastwood Associates**, and online contributors.

It is our pleasure to recognize the following individuals, foundations, and organizations for their commitment to the Academy: the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation for their transformational contribution of \$2.4 million to digitize approximately 1 million California botany specimens; Bill and Brenda Younger and the Younger Family for their visionary leadership; Dan Carroll and Stasia Obrebsky for their investment in **Islands 2030**;

Laura and Michael Lazarus for their exceptionally meaningful support of our strategic initiatives; and Dan Janney and Noelle Montgomery for their dedicated support of our biodiversity science pathway.

Thank you to everyone who supported and attended **Big Bang | Islands 2030**. Your generosity helped raise over \$2 million in support of our mission and **Islands 2030** initiative, which aims to regenerate island ecosystems in partnership with local communities and scientists. A very special thank you to our lead sponsors: Presenting Sponsor Autodesk and Party After Dark Presenting Sponsor Carmel Partners. We'd also like to thank Kevin and Julia Hartz for their incredible work as event co-chairs and Janet Lamkin of United Airlines for being this year's corporate chair. We look forward to celebrating with you next year!



# Financials

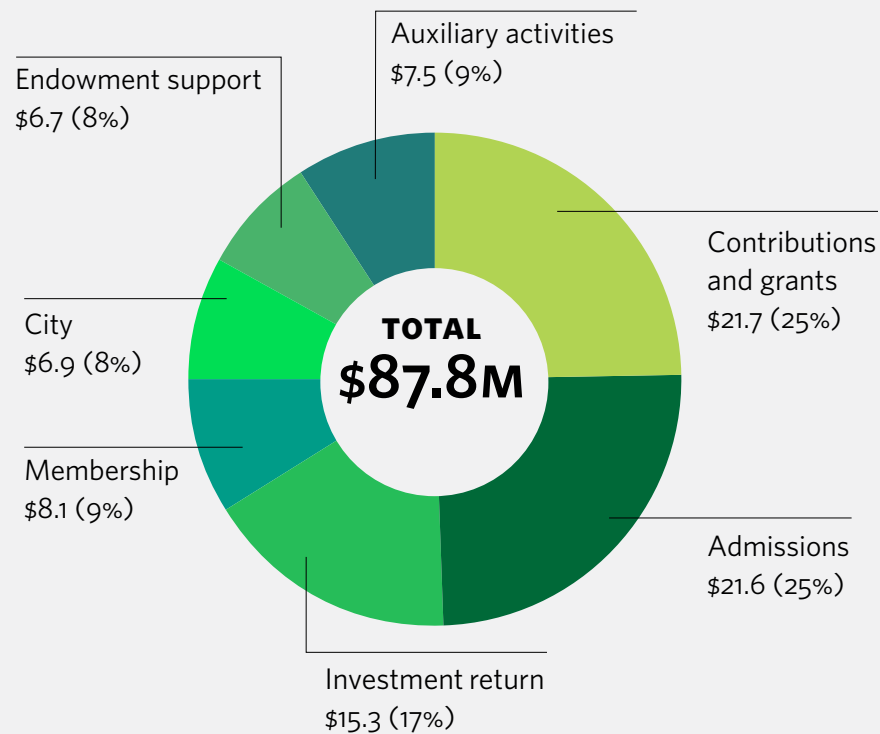
## FY23 REVENUE MIX

\$ IN MILLIONS

This is an excerpt from the Statement of Activity.

These revenue items include transactions with and without donor restrictions:

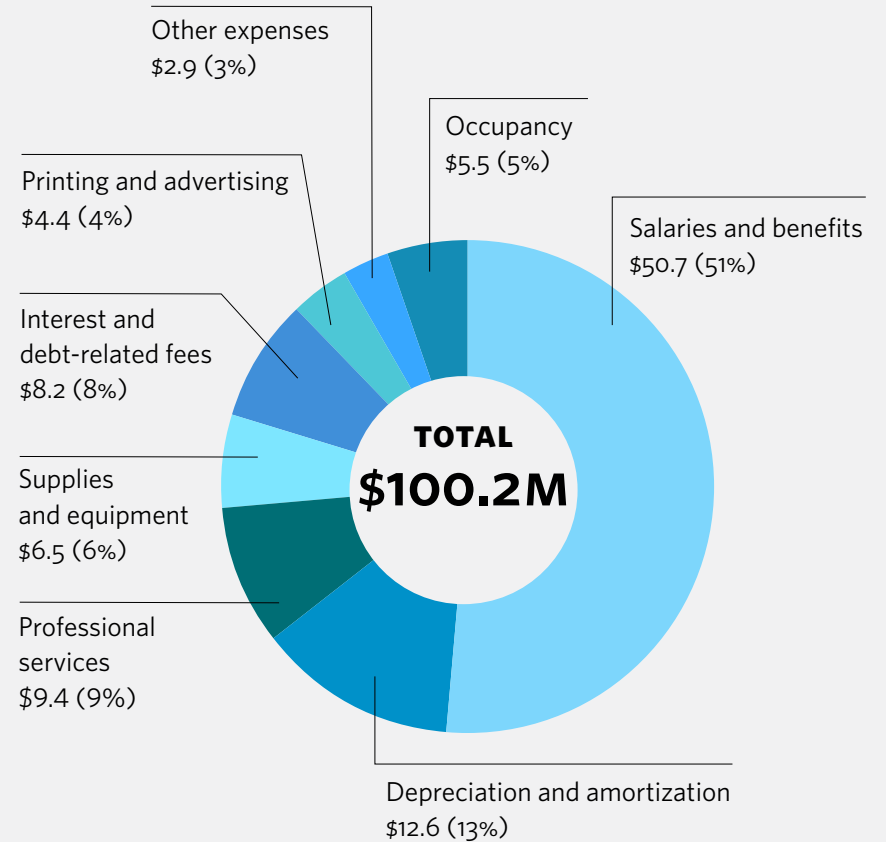
- » Contributions and grants
- » Investment return



## FY23 EXPENSE MIX

\$ IN MILLIONS

This is an excerpt from the Statement of Activity.





WRITING: Sarah Fahey

DESIGN: Spencer Vandergrift

PRINCIPLE PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Gayle Laird & Nicole Ravicchio

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY:  
Aslan, Drew Altizer Photography,  
Biodiversity Heritage Library,  
Riccardo Castiglia, Hannah  
Eugster, Brian Fisher, R. Pacifico,  
Luiz Rocha, Yi-Kai Tea,  
Kathryn Whitney

CREATIVE DIRECTION:  
Rhonda Rubinstein



55 Music Concourse Drive  
Golden Gate Park  
San Francisco, California 94118  
[calacademy.org](http://calacademy.org)

