

Network of  
Natural Science  
Museums of  
Catalonia

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## Press kit



**XARXA DE  
MUSEUS  
DE CIÈNCIES  
NATURALS  
DE CATALUNYA**

### **Mutualism**

*Biology and ecology*  
Mutually beneficial partnership  
between two species

# Founding and concept



The **Network of Natural Science Museums of Catalonia (XMCNC)** is one of the networks of museums focusing on a specific subject area promoted by the Directorate General of Cultural Heritage of the Government of Catalonia. The XMCNC was established in 2021 under a framework agreement that regulates the terms of a collaboration agreement between 10 Catalan museums and the Government of Catalonia.

The document 'Museums 2030. Plan of Museums of Catalonia', ratified by government agreement 121/2020 of 6 October, establishes that thematic museum networks serve as instruments to support the Catalan museum system. The thematic networks are groups of museums recorded in the Register of Museums of Catalonia, essential centres of cultural heritage that offer a coordinated vision of the country from the point of view of a specific theme or subject area, in this case, natural history and sciences.

As a thematic network, the XMCNC aims to promote common strategies to protect natural heritage, disseminate knowledge about it, provide educational opportunities related to natural heritage, and coordinate the efforts of the different actors in the field of natural heritage.

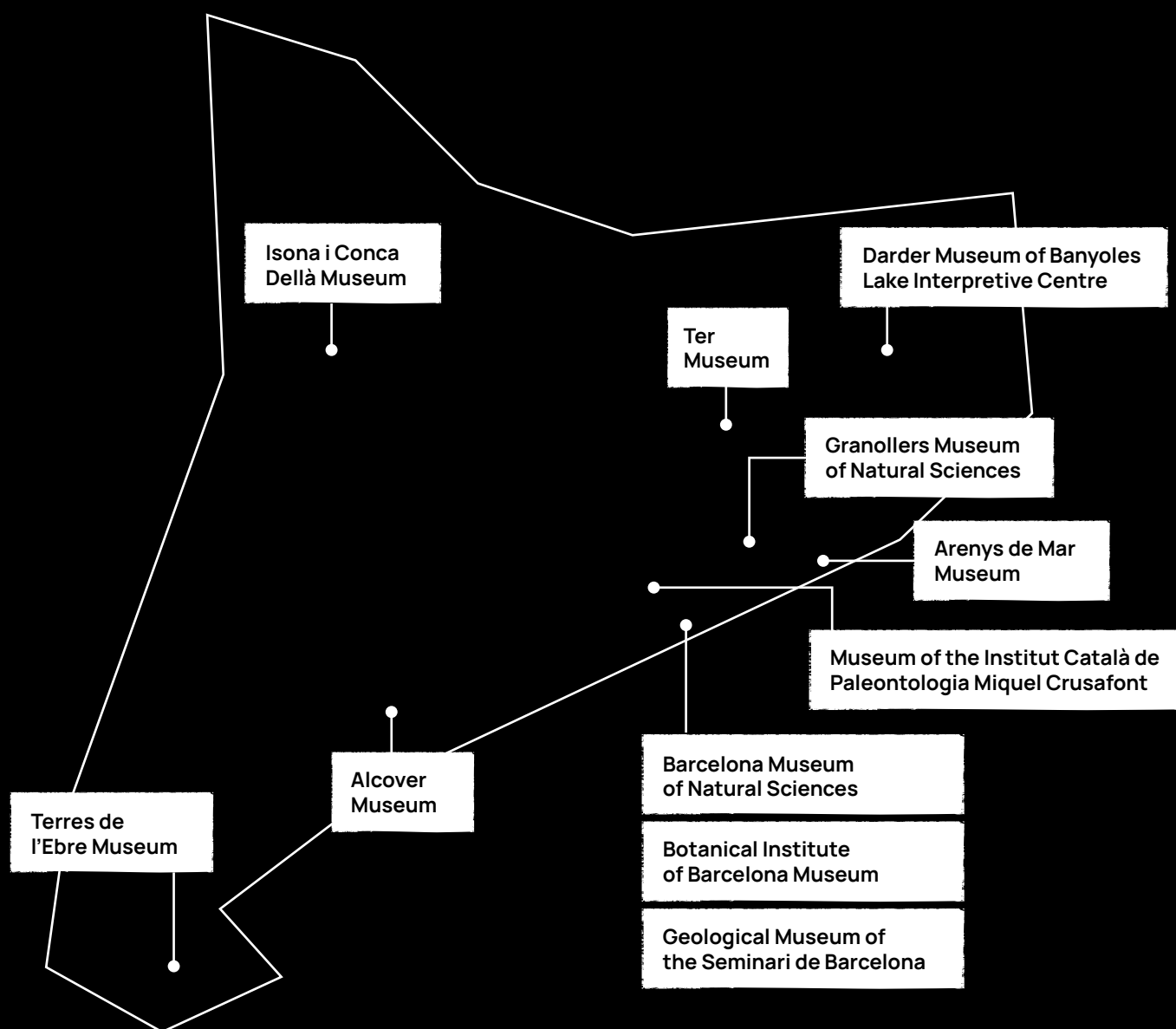
Each thematic network is led by a museum, which, as a benchmark in Catalonia, assumes the lead role in the network's thematic area. The Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona is the museum at the head of the robust community of museums that comprise the Network of Natural Science Museums of Catalonia and, as such, promotes and supports coordination and implementation of the network's actions.

↓ <sup>1</sup>Document  
*Museus 2030. Plan of museums of Catalonia:*

[https://cultura.gencat.cat/web/.content/sscc/pla-museus-2030/documents/07\\_PMC\\_executiu\\_EN\\_def.pdf](https://cultura.gencat.cat/web/.content/sscc/pla-museus-2030/documents/07_PMC_executiu_EN_def.pdf)







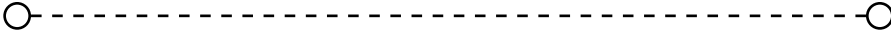
# The museums of the XMCNC

The Network of Natural Science Museums of Catalonia is comprised of 11 museums listed in the Register of Museums of Catalonia that house natural science collections in the fields of botany, geology, palaeontology, and zoology either exclusively and monographically, or as part of multidisciplinary collections.



# The museums of XMCNC

The museums that make up the Network of Natural Science Museums of Catalonia are as diverse as nature itself:

<p>Local and global heritage</p> 	<p>Monographic and multidisciplinary collections</p> 	<p>Specimens spanning from millions of years ago to the 21<sup>st</sup> century</p> 
<p>Museums of all sizes: from very small ones to very large ones</p> 	<p>Extending from one end of Catalonia to the other</p> 	<p>Dedicated to research, preserving collections and education</p> 
<p>Museums that have been in existence for years as well as museums that have opened their doors more recently</p> <div><p>from the Geological Museum of the Seminary of Barcelona (1874) to the Ter Museum (2004)</p></div>		



### Alcover Museum

Housed in a historic building in Ca Batistó and also home to an ethnographic collection on bourgeois life in the 18th century, the Alcover Museum conserves and offers a palaeontological collection resulting from the exploitation of stone in Alcover starting in 1963. Preserved fossils, found in Alcover-Mont-Ral, date to the Triassic, 238 million years ago, when the Prades Mountains did not exist and a shallow sea covered everything. Fossilisation of the softer parts of the fauna has given rise to fossils of great drama, among which the fish fossils stand out, as well as those of molluscs, crustaceans, jellyfish and sea urchins, offering one of the most complete portraits of the marine Triassic on the Iberian Peninsula recreated in the exhibition Triàsic, explosió de vida (Triassic, explosion of life), an interactive and educational exhibit that examines and teaches about the evolution of life and planet Earth which can be complemented by a visit to the site itself (the quarries).

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### Arenys de Mar Museum

In addition to its human and social science collections, the Arenys de Mar Museum houses a mineralogical collection donated in 1988 by Joaquim Mollfulleda i Borrell, made up of nearly 5,500 minerals, including specimens from all over the world. The upper floor of the museum is dedicated to the mineralogy of Catalonia, a unique place to learn about natural outcrops and the evolution of Catalan mining. The museum is an educational setting where visitors can learn about the characteristics of minerals and their importance for society.

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### Darder Museum of Banyoles Lake Interpretive Centre

One of the oldest museums in the region of Girona, it opened in 1916 to exhibit the collections of science teaching materials donated to the town of Banyoles by Francesc Darder i Llimona from Barcelona. Since then, the museum has received other donations that make up the current collection, which includes ethnological specimens and art, as well as anthropological, mycological and zoological specimens. The museum also has a section dedicated to interpretation of the basin of Banyoles Lake.



### Barcelona Museum of Natural Sciences

The Barcelona Museum of Natural Sciences provides the city with cultural opportunities for all audiences that bridge the gap between knowledge of the natural world and awareness of our current environmental problems. You can visit the permanent exhibit *Planeta Vida (Planet Life)* — an exciting journey through the history of life and the Earth — or temporary exhibitions on current issues for all audiences. The museum also offers a host of activities and workshops for families. Of particular note is *Niu de Ciència (Science Nest)*, a space for the youngest visitors (aged 0–6) as well as their families, whose aim is to promote science, and, above all, to offer fun experiences through discovery, spontaneity and play.



MUSEU  
DE CIÈNCIES NATURALS  
DE GRANOLLERS

### Granollers Museum of Natural Sciences

The Museum of Natural Sciences of Granollers is a benchmark in citizen science. With more than 500 volunteers, led by the BiBio Research Group, it is responsible for a network that collects biodiversity data on butterflies, bats, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians throughout Catalonia. This data is then used for research, and measures and actions to conserve fauna and ecosystems. Opened in 1987 under the direction of Antoni Jonch i Cuspinera after he had left the Barcelona Zoo, the museum consists of a historic house-garden (La Tela, 1912) and a new structure that houses the permanent exhibition *Tu investigues!* (Today, you investigate!). Its collections include specimens from the fields of zoology, palaeontology and geology.



### Geological Museum of the Seminari de Barcelona

Founded in 1874, the museum houses nearly 1,000,000 fossils, including more than 700 holotypes from animal and plant groups from all geological periods, of all types and from diverse origins, although the most numerous are invertebrate fossils from Catalonia and the rest of the Iberian Peninsula. The museum also has an important library, with nearly 17,000 catalogued titles and works, spanning from the 17th century to the present day, as well as a large number of specialised journals and periodicals. The archive holds documents including correspondence, photographs and field notes from notable geologists such as Almera, Vidal, Font i Sagué, Faura i Sans, Bataller, Via, Candel, Solé i Sabarís, Fontboté, Fernández de Villalta, Llopis Lladó, Masachs, Julivert and Zamarreño.



### Isona i Conca Dellà Museum

In addition to the archaeological remains of the ancient Roman city of Aeso, this museum, located in the county of Pallars Jussà, houses and showcases the rich palaeontological heritage of the Conca de Tremp basin. The fossils of the last dinosaurs to inhabit the earth, dating to 66 million years ago, are the core of the exhibition, which recreates and explains the life and ecosystem of the area during the Cretaceous Period. For a complete experience, visitors are encouraged to visit the Vilanova de Meià interpretive centre, and Dinosfera in Coll de Nargó, part of the project *Dinosaures dels Pirineus* (Dinosaurs of the Pyrenees).



### Botanical Institute of Barcelona Museum

Founded in 1934 by botanist Pius Font i Quer, the Botanical Institute of Barcelona Museum houses an herbarium with more than 800,000 herbarium sheets, consisting primarily of species from the western Mediterranean. The institute's museum also exhibits the exceptional Salvador collection, a veritable cabinet of curiosities from the Age of Enlightenment, one of the few preserved in its entirety in Europe. The collection, assembled in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries by the Salvador family, a family of chemists and botanists from Barcelona, features specimens from the natural sciences (fossils, molluscs, minerals, herbarium sheets and more), which have been preserved together with their original furniture, library and archive, making for an exceptionally interesting collection.



### Museum of the Institut Català de Paleontologia Miquel Crusafont

The museum of this foundation — located in the municipality of Sabadell, and whose trustees include the Government of Catalonia and the Autonomous University of Barcelona — serves as the spearhead of the educational mission of the organisation, whose goal is research in vertebrate and human palaeontology and preserving and disseminating knowledge in these fields at the highest level internationally. Its collections boast some 240,000 inventoried fossils, primarily from prospecting and excavation campaigns carried out in Catalonia. The fossils serve as the basis for the institute's research efforts, the results of which are passed on to society through the museum's different projects, which aim to raise awareness of the country's extraordinary fossil record and promote its preservation.

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### Ter Museum

The Ter Museum is the newest of the XMCNC's facilities. Created in 2004 on the initiative of Manlleu Town Council, it showcases cultural heritage associated with the industrialisation of the Ter River and its natural heritage. For the latter, the museum has the Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Rivers (CERM), a University of Vic research institute, and the museum's environmental unit. In addition to research, CERM offers educational and awareness-raising activities on the Ter, the main focus of the collections it houses.

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### Terres de l'Ebre Museum

This museum has a long and illustrious history and has established itself as a leader in the region, acting as a hub for the management of the rich diversity of shared heritage of the area delimited by the final stretch of the Ebro River and its mouth. It is home to archaeological, ethnological and natural science collections highlighting the richness of biodiversity found in the different ecosystems coexisting in this part of the country (the Delta, Els Ports, etc.) and telling stories that illustrate the close relationship between the natural environment and the human culture that arose in it.

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# The XMCNC in action!

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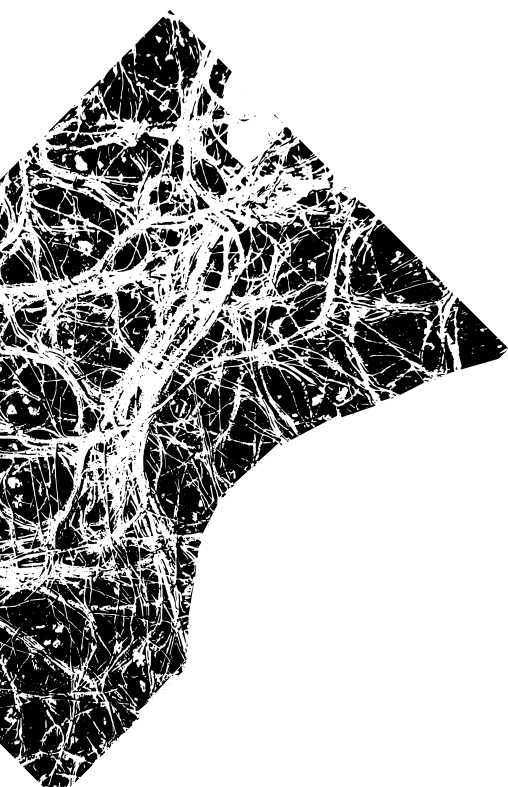
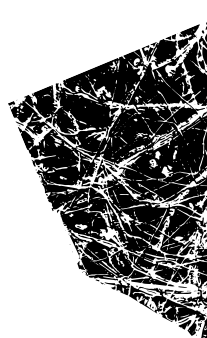


The functions of thematic museum networks are related to the field of their shared themes, which in the case of the XMCNC is historical and natural science collections. The network's functions include creating collections, conducting research, disseminating knowledge, and raising the profile of the collections of its member museums internationally.

Through the XMCNC, the museums develop common policies for protecting and disseminating knowledge on natural history and natural science heritage, and offer educational and promotional actions to promote this heritage. The network structure has also permitted joint services to be established aimed at preserving, documenting, researching, studying and disseminating knowledge on the collections of the member museums.

## Declaration of intent

Since the network's founding, its member museums have worked together...

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- 
- To apply the experience and specialisation of its teams to ensure the best possible conservation of the collections.
  - To expand understanding and improve documentation of the specimens they hold and to standardise methods and strategies for this among member organisations.
  - To contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, to raise awareness of the richness of Catalonia's ecosystems, and to educate on sustainability and respect for the environment.
  - To transmit knowledge to society and share everything the collections reveal with the public as well as the members' enthusiasm!
  - To become a leader for all museums that house natural science specimens and materials, even if they are not specialised or members of the XMCNC.

# The network's actions

From the moment it began its work, the network has pursued actions aligned with the functions assigned to it, some of which are briefly summarised below.

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### → Collection building

In this area, the network has drafted protocols to manage collections more efficiently, unified criteria for documentation, created guidelines to share suitable methods for conserving specimens, taken actions to improve collection storage, etc.

### → Research

The network's research initially focused on building content with the aim of putting on temporary exhibitions and publicising the projects and research activities of the museums in greater detail in order to identify possibilities for collaboration.

### → Dissemination of knowledge

In this area, the network has pursued joint actions (temporary exhibitions, educational activities, etc.) while at the same time promoting publication of the museums' activities with promotional strategies and tools to increase the reach of the museums' communications.

### → Internationalisation and external action

The XMCNC understands the function of internationalisation in the broadest sense of external action, through which the network establishes strategic alliances and collaborations in areas that are not necessarily museum-based where its experience in managing natural science collections and disseminating knowledge related to them can add value to the preservation of natural heritage.

# The network, an example of mutuality

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In the search for an image to represent the museums of the XMCNC as a community, the museums turned to nature, where one finds mechanisms, strategies, relationships and systems that seek efficiency, the network's *raison d'être*.

Mutualism is a concept in biology that describes interactions between organisms of different species in which each individual derives a benefit. The XMCNC is just that: a union of museums with notable differences, a system where all contribute so that all may benefit.

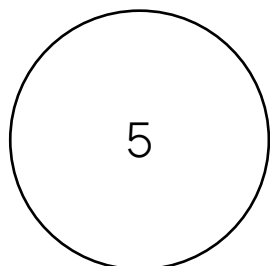
The network's corporate identity is inspired by one of these relationships of mutualism: mycorrhiza is the symbiosis between a fungus (in Greek, 'mycos') and the roots of a plant (rhizos), in which the plant obtains mineral nutrients and water from the fungus and the fungus obtains carbohydrates and vitamins it is unable to synthesise on its own. The texture of the mycorrhiza fills the big 'X' that has a key position in the network's logo (X is for 'xarxa', meaning 'network'), a letter also intimately related to the scientific world.

# The XMCNC in facts and figures

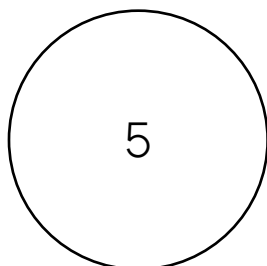
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### Collections<sup>2</sup>



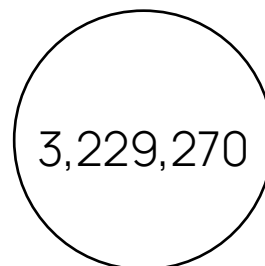
natural science  
museums



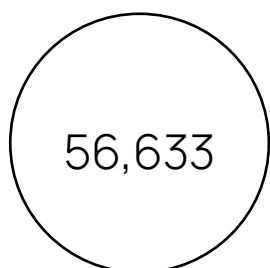
multidisciplinary  
museums where  
the natural sciences  
represent on average  
59% of the collections



**specimens  
housed**



specimens recorded



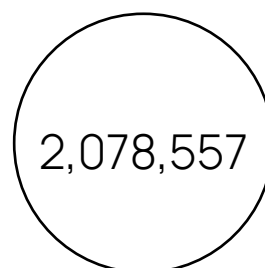
geological specimens:  
35,263 mineralogical  
and 19,880  
petrological



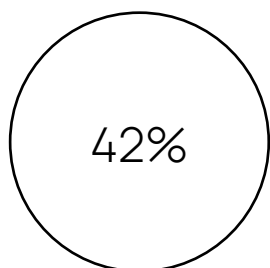
palaeontological  
specimens



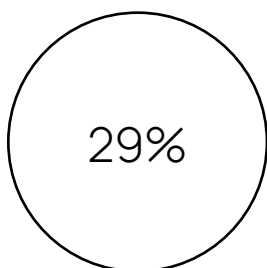
botanical  
specimens



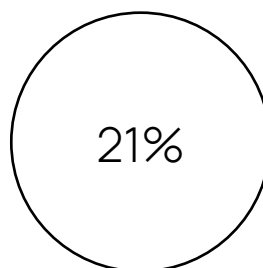
zoological specimens:  
1,926,815 of arthropod  
invertebrates, 98,645  
of non-arthropod  
invertebrates and  
48,999 of vertebrates



of specimens  
recorded



of specimens with  
inventory sheet



of specimens registered  
in digital form

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<sup>2</sup>Two museums have no data on the estimated number of specimens. In the specific data on collection composition, 1,490 unspecified geological specimens and 4,098 unspecified zoological specimens must also be taken into account.

### Public programmes

Eight museums regularly put on **temporary exhibitions**.

All museums organise and offer **educational activities**:

Guided tours, workshops, field trips, research activities, student internships, support for teachers and teaching materials, children's camps, classes in university master's programmes and participation in the Escolab and Bioblitz programmes.

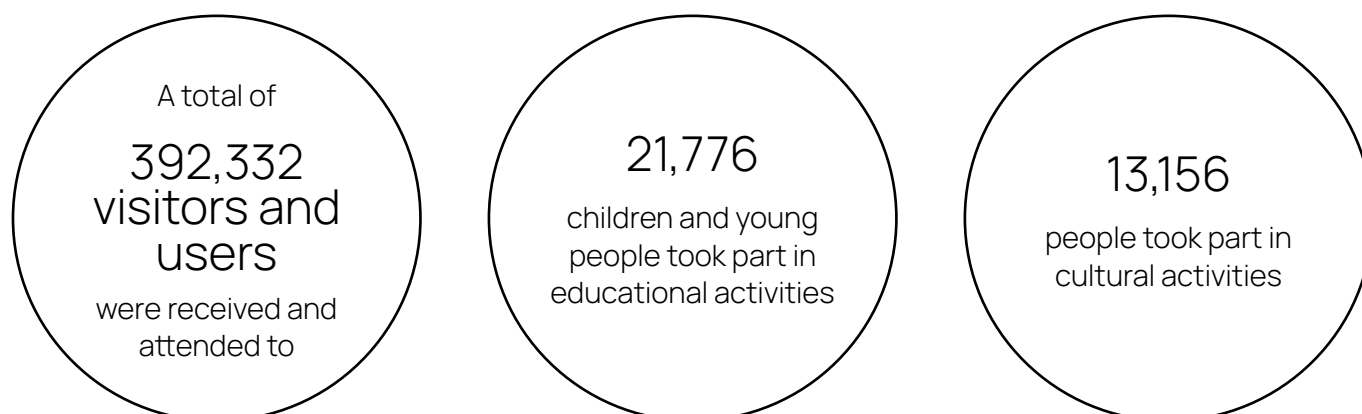
All museums organise and offer **cultural activities**:

Guided tours, itineraries, courses and workshops, conferences, talks, open house days, and outings, and participation in events such as Science Week, International Museum Day, International Museum Night, Saint George's Day, Carnival, In Museu and Bioblitz. They also produce audiovisual materials and organise workshops and events such as Bat Night, Butterfly Day, World Fish Migration Day, and photography, drawing and literary competitions.

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### Visitors and users

In 2019, in the museums of the XMCNC...



# Staff and facilities

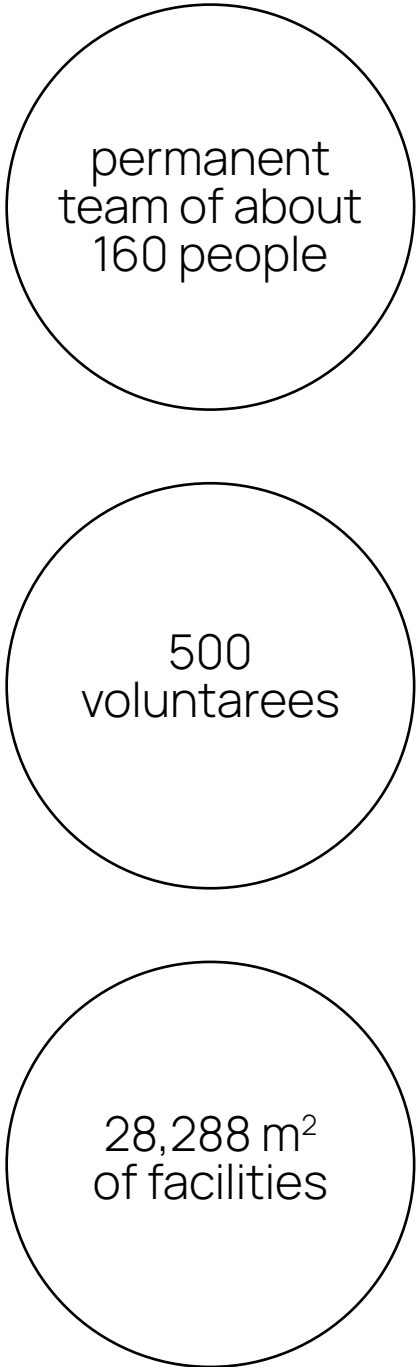
The museums of the network work with...

A **permanent team** of about 160 people, 74 of whom are specifically dedicated to natural science. One of the museums has more than 500 **volunteers**.

Staff and external companies that provide services in management, documentation, preventive conservation and restoration, cleaning, IT, surveillance, education and guidance, and maintenance of the facilities.

A total of 28,288 m<sup>2</sup> of facilities, with exhibition halls, storage areas, laboratories for natural science collections and 140,000 m<sup>2</sup> of gardens.

In addition, the museums have other spaces dedicated to the natural sciences: temporary exhibition rooms, libraries, document centres, classrooms, and assembly halls. One museum also manages a meteorological station.

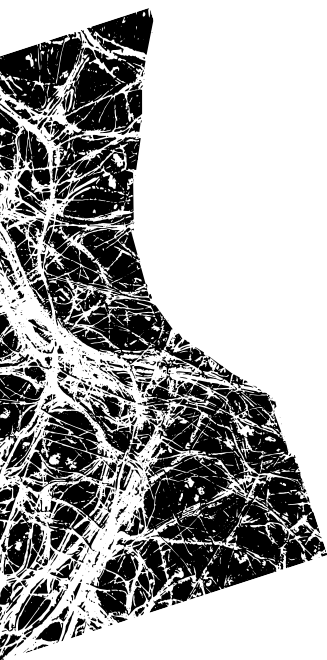


permanent  
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28,288 m<sup>2</sup>  
of facilities

# Networks and joint actions



→ The museums of the XMCNC are part of **thematic natural science networks, including:**

AHIM (Ibero-Macaronesian Herbarium Association)  
BioCAsE (Biological Collection Access Service)  
Bioexplora.cat  
Botanical Garden Conservation International  
BiBio (Biodiversity and Bioindicators Research Group)  
GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility)  
GENMEDOC (genetic resources of the western Mediterranean)  
Terres de l'Ebre Biosphere Reserve working groups  
ICHN (Catalan Institution of Natural History)  
International Plant Systematic Association  
International Planetariums  
Dinosaur Land  
Network of Environmental Information and Documentation Centers  
Wildlife Conservation Network  
Ebre, Natura & Cultura heritage network

→ The museums also work with **other thematic and regional networks**, such as:

Arqueored  
Association of Museums of Territory and Society  
Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Terres de l'Ebre (IPCITE)  
The Iberian Route  
Observatory of Ethnological and Intangible Heritage  
CSIC Libraries and Archives Network  
MNACTEC System  
Network of Ethnology Museums of Catalonia  
Network of Museums of the Girona Counties  
Tarragona and Terres de l'Ebre Museum Network  
Terres de Lleida and Aran Museum Network  
Barcelona Provincial Council's Local Museum Network  
Network of Maritime Museums of Catalonia

## The XMCNC in facts and figures

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→ They are related to **natural areas**, including:

Lake Banyoles lake basin  
Els Casots (BCIN) and Can Llobateres archaeological site  
Riberes del Ter River area  
Serra del Montsià Protected Natural Area  
Basturs Lakes and Boumort Game Reserve  
Future Natural Park of the Prades Mountains and Alcover-Mont-rà Site  
The Government of Catalonia's network of protected natural areas  
The Provincial Council of Barcelona's Natural Parks Network

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→ They have institutional relations with **administrations, institutions, associations, universities and companies**, including:

Anthesis Lavola  
Iberian Association of Limnology  
Association of Friends of the Botanical Garden of Barcelona  
Centre for Forestry Science and Technology of Catalonia  
Conca de Barberà Natural History Centre  
Iberian Centre for River Restoration  
CREAF – Centre for Ecological Research and Forestry Applications  
Government of Catalonia Department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda  
Government of Catalonia Environment and Sustainability Secretariat  
Origens Geopark  
Catalan Mineralogical Group  
Iberian Society of Ichthyology  
Autonomous University of Barcelona Faculty of Science  
University of Barcelona Faculty of Pharmacy and Food Sciences  
University of Barcelona Faculty of Biology  
University of Girona  
University of Lleida  
University of Vic  
Polytechnic University of Valencia  
Rovira i Virgili University





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