

# Discovering Diversity

## Connecting to Our Oceans through Research and Collections

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### Part 1

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The rich ocean environments along the coast of British Columbia are a treasure trove for museum invertebrate biologists (scientists who study animals without backbones). Bordered by one of the longest, most complex coastlines in the world, and represented by a mosaic of unique marine habitats, BC offers vast and diverse seascapes ideal for scientific exploration.

Each year researchers from the Royal BC Museum collect and study thousands of marine invertebrates, from sponges to snails to sea squirts. The collective knowledge that stems from such work tells the story of this extraordinary province and connects us to the world by way of our ocean.

Over the past century, the Royal BC Museum has assembled an immense collection of marine invertebrates, carefully curated to reflect the remarkable diversity of species and communities living along our seascapes. Today the invertebrate collection contains more than 65,000 *lots*. Each lot represents a distinct species from a single collecting event.

In studying the collection, museum researchers have estimated that more than 5,000 species of invertebrate (and perhaps as many as 10,000) inhabit the marine waters adjacent to British Columbia. Each species – indeed each specimen – in the collection offers a profound narrative about life within our ocean that connects us across place and time.



Collecting along the remote and rugged coastline of British Columbia. From world-famous beaches to deep-sea hydrothermal vents and isolated seamounts, the Royal BC Museum houses an extensive collection of marine invertebrates that reflect the uniqueness and diversity of the province.