

## Significance of natural history in geoscience related to the "rescue" activities of tsunami-damaged museum specimens

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On 11 March 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake hit the Tohoku district of Japan, and the associated tsunami devastated the Pacific coastal areas of the district. The disaster caused widespread damage to many museums, libraries and archives. The Agency for Cultural Affairs started the recovery of cultural assets on 1 April 2011. Museum rescue projects are promoted by the Committee for the Multi-Organizational Co-Operative Project for Preserving and Restoring Cultural Assets Damaged by Tsunami on March 11th, 2011, mainly at the Iwate Prefectural Museum, by the initiative of the Japanese Museum Association. Initially, the purpose of the rescue projects was to save cultural and other properties damaged during the disaster, and accordingly the natural history specimens were mostly not subject to saving and/or restoring. Therefore, the science community such as the Union of Japanese Societies for Natural History, including museums of natural history, offered voluntary activities to save the specimens from the damaged and destroyed museums. Natural history collections provide information invaluable for many fields of earth and planetary sciences, playing an essential role to understand the formation of the solar system, the history of the Earth, the evolution of life, environmental change, energy and resources, natural disasters, and so on. Japan Geoscience Union should make an effort for revival of natural history research and education in the current education system.

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