

# The ZooMu Initiative: Enhancing the Value of Zoo Collections to Advancing Biological Sciences by Bridging the Gap Between Zoos and Museum

**Mr Gregory Watkins-Colwell<sup>1</sup>**, Dr. Alexander Shepack<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Steven M. Whitfield<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Sinlan Poo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Yale Peabody Museum Of Natural History, New Haven, United States*, <sup>2</sup>*University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, United States*, <sup>3</sup>*Memphis Zoo, Memphis, United States*, <sup>4</sup>*Zoo Miami, Miami, United States*

(LT2) Long time no see, Lecture Theatre 5, Appleton Tower, 11 Crichton Street, EH8 9LE, June 7, 2022, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Like museums, zoos and aquariums hold a wealth of biological resources in their collections that are unique to these institutions. As modern zoological institutions transition from exhibits to conservation organizations, zoos are starting to focus on ways to enhance their contribution to the advancement of biological sciences. Driven by this need, in 2021 iDigBio hosted a 3-day workshop bringing together bringing together zoo and museum professionals and researchers in the larger scientific community to discuss plans for improved access to zoo collections and increased collaboration across institutions. Thus began the ZooMu initiative. These efforts catalyzed a much-needed discourse on the underutilization and appreciation for living and preserved collections and the tremendous capacity they hold for scientific research and biodiversity conservation. The similarities between traditional museums of natural history and living collections are numerous; including databases, archiving, biological sample collection and care, as well as the more obvious shared interests in biodiversity conservation and education. The cultures may differ, but zoos and museums share many goals. This presentation will summarize where things are now and what the next steps are.

