iDigBio
Integrated Digitized Biocollections

Serving, Supporting, and Connecting Natural History Collections: From NANSH to SCNet
Small Collections have the potential to significantly expand our knowledge of landscape-level biogeography

On the Issue of Small

What is the definition of "small"?
- < 100,000 specimens
- Regional in scope
- Ecologically, taxonomically or geographically biased
- Not included in regional inventories or monographic studies

"If you feel small, you are one of us!"

Isn't the difference between large and small collections just a matter of scale?
Small collections face a unique set of challenges:
- Care of the collection is not part of the curator's official job responsibilities.
- Curators are isolated within their institution and relative to the larger collections community.
- Maintaining the collection must be done with no funds, curatorial assistance or institutional support.
- Directors of collections lack the systematic expertise for all or part of the collection.

What do collections professionals need to understand about the small collections community?
- Small collections professionals do not see themselves as collections professionals!
- Institutions with small collections may not view the collection as contributing to the institutional mission.
- Curators of small and large institutions may not see the value of small collections.
- Many small collections are wholly unaware of the national digitization effort.

What is the value of small collections to the national digitization effort?

Valuable data for the scientific community
Small collection specimens:
- Are unduplicated in large collections.
- Represent intense regional sampling.
- Characterize community composition through focused sampling.
- Are the best source of data for biological hotspots (biological field and research stations).
- Are a "hidden source" of specimens representing curator's expertise.

Important resources for education about natural history collections and digitized data
- Majority of undergraduate students are educated at institutions with small collections.
- Students working in collections express increased understanding of the nature of science.
- Collections are a valuable resource to authentically engage students in inquiry-based learning (AIM-UP.org).
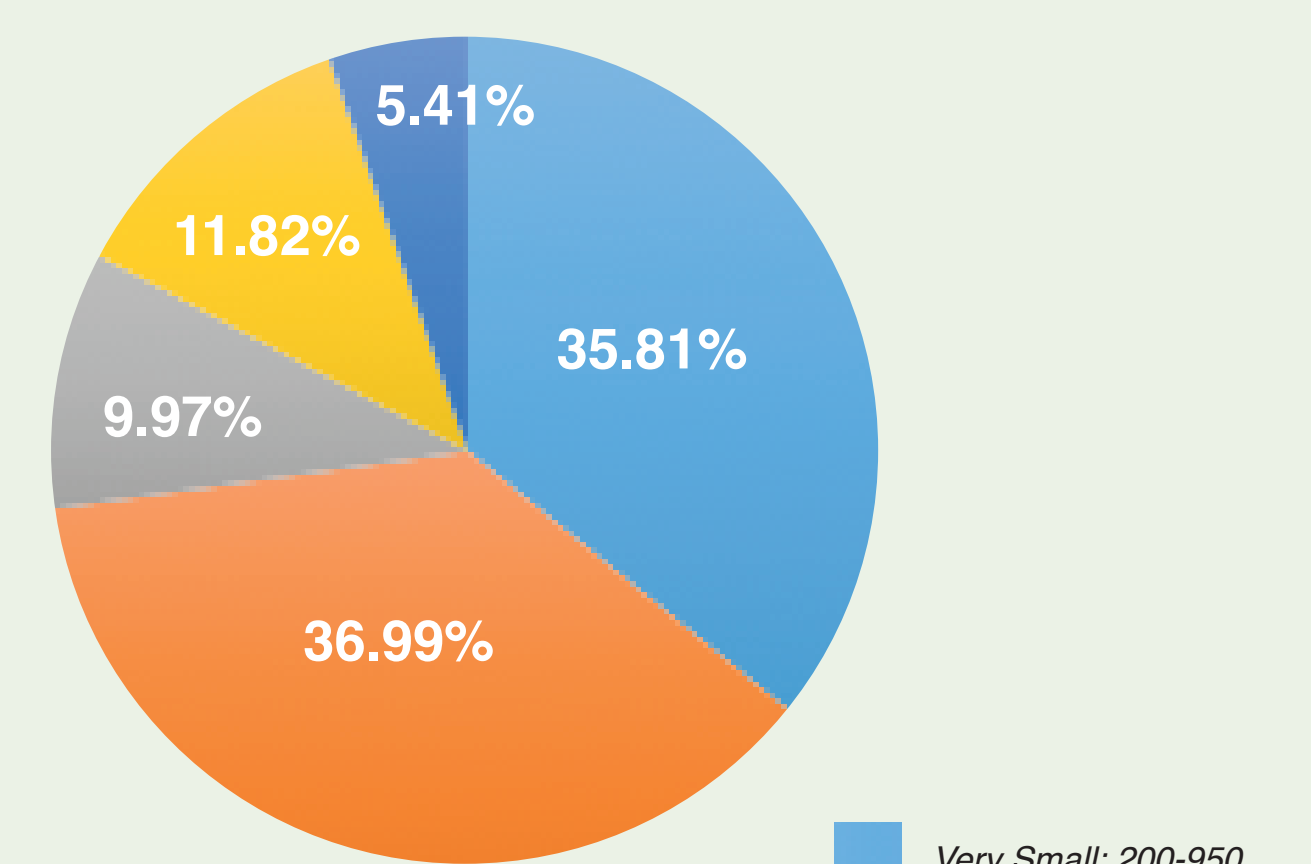
Percent of herbaria in different size classes
- 5.41%
- 35.81%
- 36.99%
- 9.97%
- 11.82%

Percent of specimens housed in herbaria of different size classes
- 0.52%
- 6.34%
- 5.64%
- 19.55%
- 67.94%

Legend:
- Very Small: 200-950
- Small: 10,000 - 48,260
- Medium: 50,000 - 90,000
- Large: 100,000 - 472,000
- Very Large: >650,000

SCNet
Small Collections Network

NANSH
North American Network of Small Herbaria

NANSH was established by an iDigBio Working Group devoted to promote and encourage the involvement of small herbaria in the national digitization effort. Founded at the 2013 Association of Southeastern Biologists, the group has expanded to produce resources in support of small herbaria. NANSH is an inclusive informal group providing an opportunity for curators of small herbaria to work together towards a common goal of curation and digitization of all herbarium collections.

Products of NANSH Working Group
- **NANSH writing group.**
- **NANSH educational resources (CollectionsEducation.org).**
- **Mobilizing small herbaria workshop, FSU.**
- **Small herbarium workshop, Botany 2014.**
- **Webinar series.**
- **NANSH Symbiota portal (nansh.org/portal).**

SCNet
Small Collections Network

SCNet is an iDigBio initiative devoted to supporting small to moderately-sized natural history collections. SCNet's primary goal is to recruit, retain, and sustain small collections within digitization initiatives via an informal, grassroots, working-group-style interdisciplinary network. SCNet strives to address the curatorial and digitization related challenges unique to small collections.

Products of SCNet:
- **Small collections workshop, CMU 2014.**
- **Small collections mini-symposium, SPNHC 2014.**
- **Small collections symposium, SPNHC 2015.**
- **Webinar series.**
- **Community listserve (IDIGBIOSCNET-L).**
- **SCNet Website (scnet.acis.ufl.edu).**

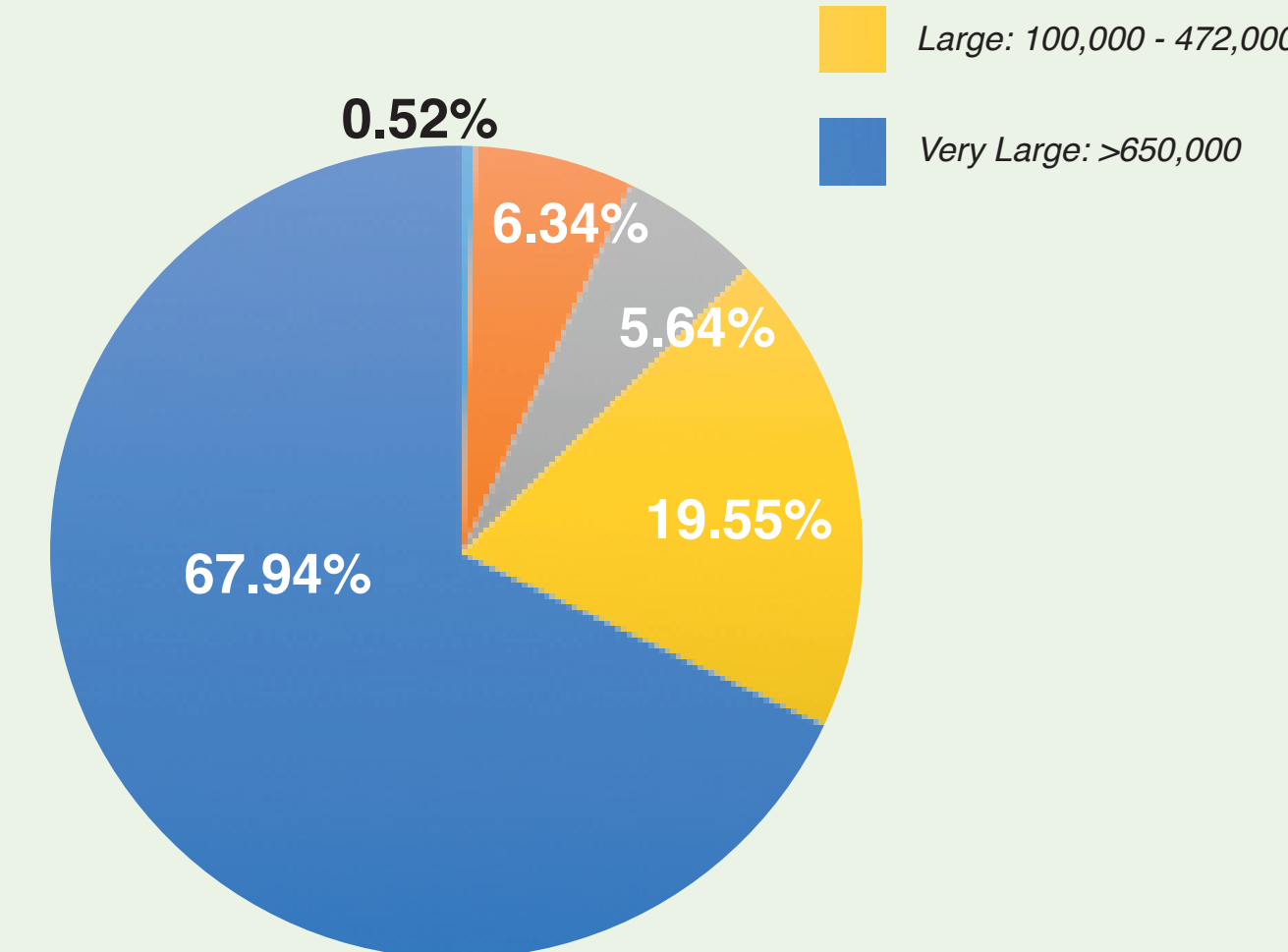## How does digitization help the small collection and collection professional?

- Expands the accessibility to data in collections.
- Enhances impact of data in collection.
- Ensures inclusion of collection and collection data in larger research initiatives.
- Increases connectivity between researchers.
- Promotes institutional visibility.
- Increases fundability.

"If your data are not on the web, they don't exist!"

It is not just a matter of providing resources, we need to reach out and actively recruit, cultivate and sustain the involvement of small collections in the larger collections community.

Herbarium Digitization Training Workshop
Valdosta State University
Sponsored by iDigBIO
September 2012

Great Lakes Small Collections Workshop
Central Michigan University
Sponsored by Hanes Foundation and CMU Institute of Great Lakes Research
October 2012

Workflows and Challenges in the Digitization of Biological Specimens Symposium & Workshop
Association of Southeast Biologists
Sponsored by iDigBio
Spring 2013

North American Network of Small Herbaria (NANSH) "interest" group
Sponsored by iDigBio
Summer 2013

Mobilizing Small Herbaria Workshop
Florida State University
Sponsored by iDigBio
December 2013

Small Collections Network (SCNet)
Sponsored by iDigBio
Spring 2014

Workshop on Recruiting, Supporting and Sustaining Small Collections in the National Digitization Initiative
Central Michigan University
Sponsored by CollectionsWeb and iDigBio
April 2014

Small Collection Mini-Symposium
Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC)
Sponsored by iDigBio and SCNet
June 2014

Small Herbarium Workshop
Botany 2014
Sponsored by iDigBio, NANSH and SCNet
July 2014

Small Collection Symposium
Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC)
Sponsored by iDigBio, NANSH and SCNet
May 2015

Becoming Involved

- Join the community listserv (IDIGBIOSCNET-L).
  To add yourself to the list, email listserv@lists.ufl.edu with the following command in the email:
  subscribe IDIGBIOSCNET-L first_name last_name
  (e.g., subscribe IDIGBIOSCNET-L Jane Doe)

- Join the NANSH Symbiota portal:
  nansh.org/portal/index.php

- Watch the SCNet Website:
  scnet.acis.ufl.edu

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