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SCIENCE RESEARCH IN ACTION ON DISPLAY AT THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

New program lets museum visitors in on the mystery of science

PHILADELPHIA—Dr. Nate Rice gently nudges the white quilt batting into the cleaned skin of the drake Bufflehead, while across the table his assistant, Dana Cohen, manipulates tweezers to pluck out the eyeball of the drake Pintail duck.

It may seem like just another day at the Academy of Natural Sciences, but something is very different. The process of preserving bird specimens for the museum's world-renowned ornithology collection is not being done in the laboratory. It is happening right out in the open for museum visitors to see and to ask questions of the scientists doing the work.

"It's all part of our continuing effort to make science more accessible and immediate to the general public," said acting Academy President Dr. Ted Daeschler. "We're showing our visitors what our scientists do everyday in the research labs on the upper floors of this museum and why it is important."

Starting this summer, museum visitors strolling through the [Science Live](#) station on the first floor will find scientists, archivists and volunteers who usually work behind the scenes doing a variety of activities. These include pressing plants, examining insects, analyzing microscopic algae, storing antique glass lantern slides, sorting small fossils, and preparing bird study skins, as Rice and Cohen were doing on a recent Wednesday. The staff will be working in public view from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. most weekdays in August. Starting September, they will be there at the same time on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Visitors can ask them questions and even participate in the work in some cases.

Rice oversees the Academy's ornithology collection of about 200,000 bird specimens representing nearly every species of bird on Earth. "There's an intense fascination about why we collect birds and how we preserve them," he said. "These beautiful creatures tell us a lot about current issues like climate change, habitat loss, and basic natural-history issues that are vital for understanding nature and the environment both past and present."

To watch a video of Science Live in action, visit www.ansp.org/activities/science-live.php.

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The Academy of Natural Sciences, founded in 1812, is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas and a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.

HOURS: Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. **ADMISSION:** \$12 adults; \$10 children 3-12, seniors, college students, military personnel; from May 28–Sept. 6 military and up to 5 family members are free; free for members and children under 3. \$2 fee for Butterflies!