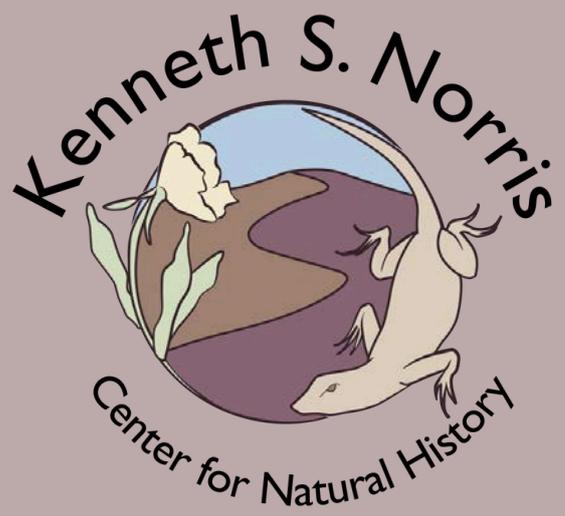


Annual Report 2023-24



Celebrating Our First 10 Years



Student-centered from the start

It all began with an idea to merge UCSC's small natural history museum with Professor Ken Norris' legacy of experiential natural history education. In 2014, within a few rooms in the Natural Sciences 2 building, we created a new center focused on supporting natural history education for undergraduates. Even at our inception, our students worked alongside us, bringing their good ideas and brimming enthusiasm to the work of creating a new shared community space.



Students helping design the Norris Center, circa 2014



The UCSC Natural History Club, circa 2014

Ten years of continual growth

Each year since our inception, we have added new internships, classes, programs, events, and community involvement.

Growing from one part-time curator and one faculty director in 2014, our staff now includes two full-time staff members, a dynamic pair of faculty directors, multiple lecturers, a dedicated executive committee of faculty and community members, a revolving group of paid undergraduate curators, a band of dedicated volunteers, and a growing community of Friends.



Our “community room” working as designed



One of our 2024 class field trips

Interdisciplinary leadership and inspired teamwork propelled us forward this year



The Norris Center Leadership Team:
Gizelle Hurtado, Chris Lay, Ingrid Parker, Karolina Karlic

This year, we welcomed two new faculty directors: Plant Ecologist Ingrid Parker and first ever Art+Science Faculty Director Karolina Karlic. Together, we expanded our programs, made additional improvements to our facility, and capitalized on multiple significant funding opportunities. When an unexpectedly large number of campus groups reached out to ask us to contribute to their classes and programs, we enthusiastically said yes! While spreading our impact more widely across campus and beyond, we also invested in our small core group of undergraduate student curators working in the Norris Center, recognizing the vital role they play in creating and growing our community on campus. At the same time, our dedicated new Friends group worked hard to support and amplify our efforts to build connections in the broader Santa Cruz community.

Our 2024 achievements in numbers

- Engaged with **2,106** students and **292** community members for a record total of **9,427** user days.
- Supported **55** quarterly internship positions.
- Sponsored or contributed to **37** classes, with additions from **3** new academic departments.

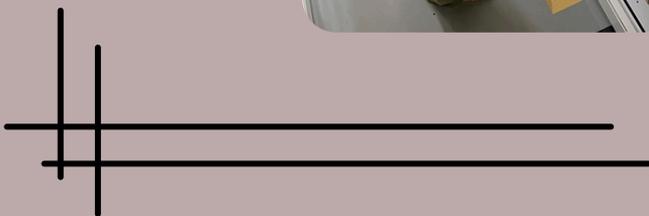
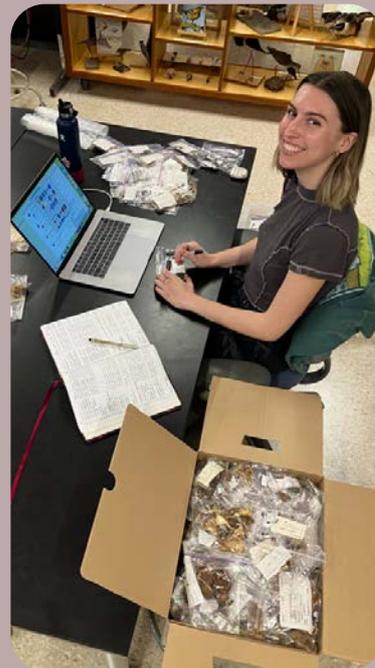


Some of our Norris Center undergraduate student awardees with assistant director Gizelle Hurtado.

- Funded **22** paid quarterly positions, including a core group of undergraduate curators helping lead Norris Center programs year-round.
- Supported a record number of student financial awards, including **8** undergraduate project awards, **8** course scholarships, and **6** new art + science graduate student fellowships.
- Hosted or partnered with other campus and community groups in a record **17(!)** public events.

Another major step forward for our collections stewardship

This year, with inspired leadership from faculty co-director Ingrid Parker, we received a generous grant from the California Institute for Biodiversity to further secure many of our collections. Over the next year, we will focus on completing important curatorial work on several of our collections with significant backlogs of unaccessioned specimens. In addition, we will upgrade collections infrastructure while providing mentoring and museum-related career training for a large number of paid undergraduate curators and introductory student interns. We are excited to continue building upon the major investments we have made in our collections over the past decade, including digitizing many of our specimen records, and installing high quality compactor storage cabinets.



Our internships, new and old, were as popular as ever.

Alongside our core internships working with our various collections, we created a new internship opportunity to help build up our vertebrate bone and skeleton collections. With help from Ecology and Evolutionary Biology graduate student Maddie McNelis, our collections manager Dr. Gizelle Hurtado initiated a new “skeletonization” project, including creating articulated skeletons of common mammals in our collection.



Above: with special permission, our taxidermy interns worked together to preserve a few California Condor specimens killed by lead poisoning.

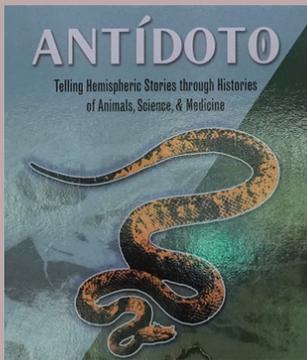


Left, right, below: taxidermy and bone articulation projects.



New classes, new collaborations

Of the record 37 classes we supported this year, we worked with three from new departments, including History, History of Art and Visual Culture, and Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS).



LALS faculty member Dr. Lily Balloffet's archival research on the natural history of venomous animals and the medical history of antivenoms brought her to the Norris Center's venomous snake collection. This led to a yearlong collaboration, including hosting her class, inviting her to speak at our symposium, and helping with the launch of her multimedia project *Antidoto*.



Above, An entomology class in the Norris Center and our campus natural history class in the field.

Below, teaching nature inquiry skills to first-year students and looking up close at fungi on campus.



Old classes, new inspirations

The 52nd Natural History Field Quarter class continued to offer students an immersive quarter-long experience learning about California natural history and land management, including new visits to intertidal ecosystems and the western slope of the northern Sierra Nevada range.



"The ability to be vulnerable and make emotional connections with the naturalizing we did changed my life. Sleeping outside in tents for 6 weeks was fantastic. The journal is something I will keep forever. The career discussions has helped me feel better about my future."



"And most of all, I have NEVER, EVER been so aware and connected with the world around me, and I mean nature and people. I feel like I've learned so much from everyone: new perspectives, new appreciations, new understandings, new loves and desires. I remember in the car ride back home after trip one, after catching up with my mom, she just said, 'You've changed'. I really think I have. And I owe it entirely to this course and my new friends. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."
Jordan Mangskau, NHFQ 2024



Art + Science Everywhere

Our nature illustration classes, our student project awards, our CAMINO (Center to Advance Mentored, Inquiry-based Opportunities in Ecology and Conservation) scholars, and our many events and collaborations, all continued to thrive this year.

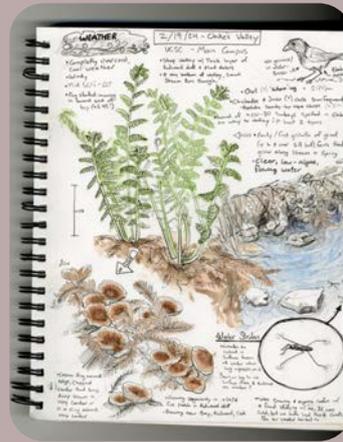


Left, Summer Grasslands UCSC, a poster project in progress by CAMINO scholar Katya Rodriguez.

Middle left, Norris Center Project Awardee Lily Nash's climate-grief community quilt.

Middle, right, sample field journal pages from our nature illustration class.

Bottom, artwork created from art classes engaging with Norris Center collections.



New Leadership in the Arts



The addition of an Art + Science Faculty director position to our leadership team opened up many new possibilities for our art+science program. In her first full year, Art Professor Karolina Karlic helped to significantly strengthen connections between the arts and all aspects of our natural history program. With her leadership, we provided our students with hands-on, one-to-one mentorship, from arts faculty project advisors from across campus, providing new interdisciplinary opportunities and exposure to the practice of critical arts research. This approach led to many meaningful collaborations and supported us in creating a new art+science graduate student fellowship program.



Visions of World Renewal: Cultural and ecological restoration along the Klamath River

Graduate Fellows: Brook Thompson & Jonas Banta
Faculty Advisor: Professor Jorge Menna Barreto

"It is our hope and intent that the outcomes of our collaboration will visualize and communicate the many layers of significance in restoration and research that we witness and experience as indigenous people, researchers, and advocates."

Jonas Banta



Above: several of our new Art + Science graduate fellows.

Ethograph (comics for a non-human narrative)

Graduate Fellow: Raty Syka
Faculty Advisor: Professor Enrique Leal

Collective Landscapes

Graduate Fellows:
Dima Mabsout & Alberto Vazquez
Faculty Advisor: Professor Laurie Palmer

Niebla Nocturna

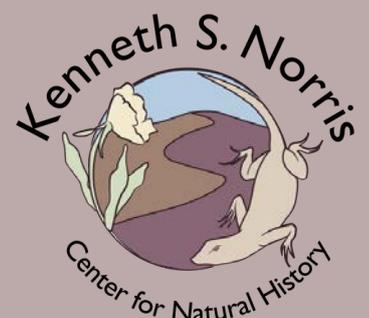
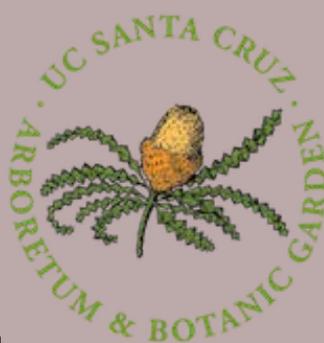
Graduate Fellow: Gonzalo Galetto
Faculty Advisor: Professor Jennifer Parker

Plants and People

Thanks to a generous grant from the UC Santa Cruz Foundation Board Opportunity Fund, the Norris Center will work with student artists, the UCSC Arboretum Amah Mutsun Relearning Program, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band (AMTB) to create an illustrated booklet about the AMTB's traditional relationships with twenty local native plant species. This project will include a public event to be held at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History in 2026 and is part of a larger longer-term effort to create a comprehensive resource for all the native plant species important to the AMTB.



Above: Drawings by past Norris Center student awardee Linnea Gullikson will be included in the developing botanical reference.



Building community through events large and small



We hosted or sponsored many more events than any previous year, including:

above, skull painting for Day of the Dead.

left, Dr. Lily Balloffet's Antidoto pop-up exhibit.



right, kick-off event for a week-long Art+Science Fair for the Ecology and Evolutionary Department.

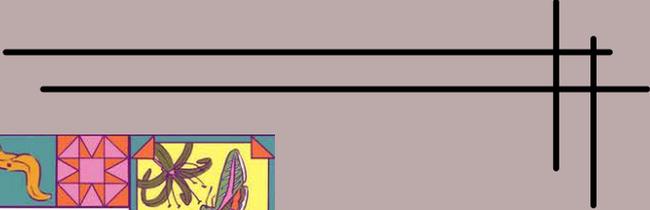


below left, nature movie night at the Norris Center.



below right, "Fire and Fungi" campus seminar.





UC SANTA CRUZ
KENNETH S. NORRIS CENTER PRESENTS

10TH ANNIVERSARY

NATURAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL HISTORY

The Cowell Ranch hay barn was transformed as we hosted over 120 students and community members at our annual natural history symposium. We showcased work from dozens of students, including natural history exhibits, nature-themed artwork, a participatory nature block printing workshop, student talks, and our headliner, Santa Cruz County Third District Supervisor Dr. Justin Cummings. A shout-out to our loyal volunteers and to the Friends of the Norris Center for their support.





Wonderment meets Empowerment

This year, we celebrated the life and legacy of beloved UCSC professor Frank Andrews. Just as Ken Norris was known as the “professor of wonderment”, Frank was revered as the “professor of empowerment”. Frank was an important mentor for several current Norris Center employees, including several of our current lecturers and its current administrative director Chris Lay. He and his wife Jean were our first major donors in 2010.



In honor of Frank, we created **The Frank Andrews Fund for Undergraduate Empowerment**. Donations will be administered by the Norris Center and used to support transformational opportunities for UCSC students similar to those provided by the classes Frank taught. Visit norriscenter.ucsc.edu and click on “Support Us” to learn more and make a contribution.



Community Connections Through our Friends Group

In its first full year as our community support group, the Friends of the Norris Center focused on supporting our community-wide events, leading special field experiences for members, volunteering in our herbarium, helping us with donor correspondence, and providing temporary housing for our out-of-town course assistants for our Natural History Field Quarter class. We are thrilled to have such strong community support and look forward to their continued commitment to building connections between our students and the broader community. Already nearing 90 members, the Friends of the Norris Center are always looking for new members; to join, visit norriscenter.ucsc.edu and click on the Friends link.



left: cleanup day at the Norris Center.



right, helping our art+science student Ty Brown sell their pollinator calendar.



left, our "herbarium crew" planning fall internships.



right and below, Friends field trips to Younger Lagoon Natural Reserve

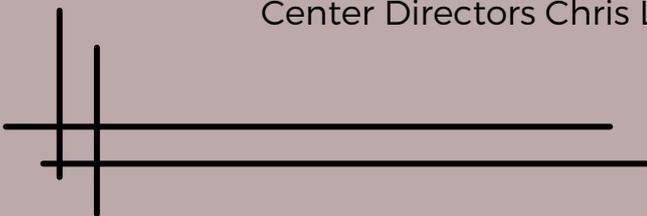


Forward together into the future

Celebrating the milestone of ten years at UC Santa Cruz has left us inspired for what we might accomplish in the next ten years. Looking forward, we already see exciting possibilities, including expanding our space and improving our visibility on campus, growing our current programs, creating new classes that get even more students out into nature and into the Norris Center, building and protecting our collections, and continually investing in our long-term financial stability. Thanks to all of you: the students, staff, faculty, alumni, community members, and donors that have contributed to the amazing natural history community here at UC Santa Cruz. Onward together into our second decade!



Phoebe Glucs, (UCSC class of 2045?), daughter of Norris Center lecturer Dr. Zeka Glucs, with Norris Center Directors Chris Lay and Gizelle Hurtado.



Your support helped make it all happen!

We are so grateful to the 130+ donors and 2 granting agencies that contributed nearly \$400,000 to our programs this year!

\$1,000+

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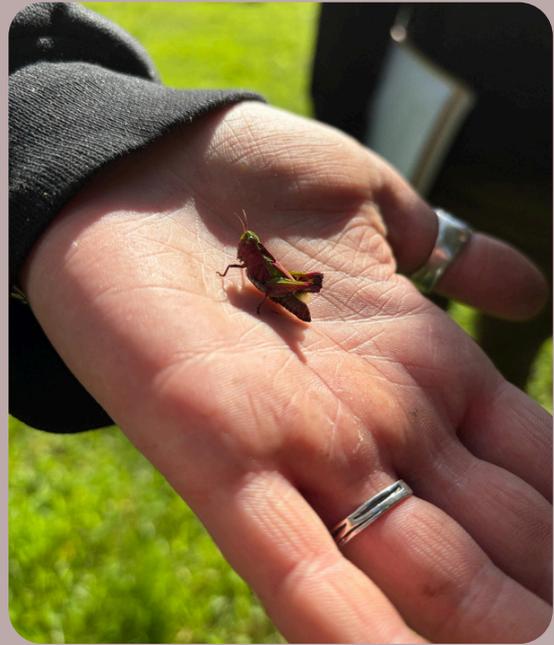


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