

Jurassic Coast Collection Project Plan

The Jurassic Coast is one of the world's most famous fossil sites and is visited by millions of people each year. Historically a key locality for the development of palaeontology, the eroding coastline continues to provide new discoveries and offer inspiration to future generations of earth, ocean and climate scientists. The geology of the Dorset and East Devon Coast provides an unparalleled opportunity to traverse the Mesozoic era. The exceptional fossil fauna and flora, which include vertebrates, invertebrates, plants and microfossils, ensures the Site's continued recognition and representation among globally significant fossil assemblages.

The Jurassic Coast was recognised for inscription as a World Heritage Site for its unique collection of globally important geological and palaeontological sites, many of which have contributed to our fundamental understanding of the earth sciences. The Jurassic Coast boasts many internationally important palaeontological sites that span the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous. The near-continuous sequence of Mesozoic rocks hosts an exceptionally well-preserved fossil fauna, with many discoveries new to science.

Whilst the importance of the Site's palaeontology is well established in published scientific literature, demonstrating its role within World Heritage presents certain challenges. More could be done to improve access to important fossils from the Jurassic Coast, and to better emphasise their unique role in the story of the World Heritage Site. Of the specimens that fully illustrate the World Heritage Status of this coastline, some are stored or displayed locally however many are to be found in national and international museums. In addition, there are many spectacular and important specimens held in private collections, which have an unquestionable, albeit unrealised, potential to inspire, given a suitable approach to research and public engagement.

The proposal then, is to identify a globally important collection of fossils which explicitly demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The creation of such a collection would require collaboration and co-operation between museums, academics, collectors and the Jurassic Coast Trust. By providing access to the collection through a digital platform and special exhibitions, the public will be able to engage with the story of the Jurassic Coast as told by its fossils and better appreciate the global reach of this most famous of fossil sites.

The raw data compiled during the creation of the Jurassic Coast Collection will provide a new and important evidence base to energise research and scientific study along the World Heritage Site. It will help identify priority areas for specimen acquisition, promoting further investment and support for the creation of new facilities that expand the collective capacity to conserve and curate the Site's incredible fossil heritage whilst encouraging public interest in and recognition of an excellent network of local museums and visitor centres.

Project Overview

The Aim of the Jurassic Coast Collection

The Jurassic Coast Collection Project is a way to encourage research, access to and engagement with fossils from our coastline. The project will actively promote long-term guardianship, the sharing of skills and ambitious display of fossils in local museums, existing or future. The communal benefits of an exceptional core collection of fossils are undeniable, and the Jurassic Coast Trust hopes to catalyse enthusiasm and momentum behind this project in order to share future successes along the entire length of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.

The aims of the Jurassic Coast Collection can be summarised as follows:

- To demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value of the Jurassic Coast's palaeontology through its dispersed fossil collections.
- To manage access to important fossils through a coordinated effort between the Jurassic Coast Trust and key stakeholders: museums, collectors, academics and other scientific institutions.

Where do the Jurassic Coast Collection and the Jurassic Coast Trust fit?

The Jurassic Coast Trust regards this ambitious project to be of great significance, highlighting the importance of the World Heritage Site's fossils as never before. The Jurassic Coast Collection's aims and objectives combine scientific, learning and engagement aspirations that are shared by many of the projects' potential partners. These partners are vital to the success of the project and to the future of the World Heritage Site.

Early scoping work has highlighted how fossils found on the Jurassic Coast are the concern of many stakeholders, each with their own priorities and aspirations. The Jurassic Coast Collection aspires to build on areas of shared interest, and a common love of fossils, in order to create a valuable resource and encourage the transfer of sustainable skills.

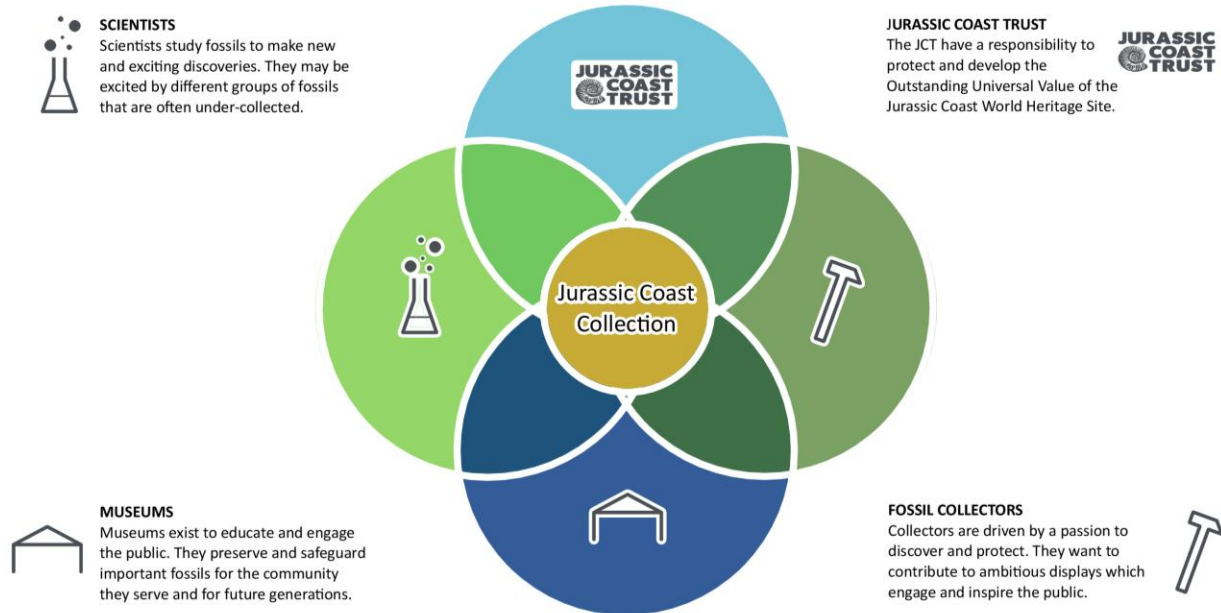


Figure 1 - Illustration of the different stakeholder groups and their objectives and aspirations. At the centre of all these is a commonality achieved by the Jurassic Coast Collection

The project aims to promote and develop an existing network of museums and visitor centres on the World Heritage Site. At its core are three sustainability and heritage-focused motivations:

- To address potential conservation and curation needs in local museums
- To identify opportunities to improve the scientific/engagement value of all specimens
- To encourage engagement with specimens currently held in private collections

Outline of Objectives

To achieve the ambitious aims of the Jurassic Coast Collection project, three key objectives have been proposed:

1. A top-level Inventory of Jurassic Coast fossils

A review of important fossils found on the Jurassic Coast held both in existing local and national museum collections as well as those in privately owned fossil collections. An initial inclusion strategy will be proposed in line with the **Significance Assessment Process** to assess the value and meaning of potential specimens. The inventory will provide an important resource for research, access to and engagement with the World Heritage Site's palaeontology.

2. Statement of Significance

The **Statement of Significance** is a museum tool to communicate the importance, context and meaning of, in the case of the Jurassic Coast Collection, a dispersed collection of fossils from the

Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The **Statement of Significance** will be a key piece of evidence to express the Collection's current and potential access, engagement and research value to the community it serves and all stakeholders. It will be vital for building future support, investment and participation in the project.

3. **Context Statement**

A **Context Statement** will frame the Jurassic Coast Collection's role in the future of the World Heritage Site and how this relates to stakeholder groups. The Jurassic Coast Collection will demonstrate the OUV of Jurassic Coast palaeontology in the wider context of the World Heritage Site and global earth sciences.

Phase 1 Actions

The Jurassic Coast Collection is an ambitious project that requires a stable foundation built on commitment, evidence and demonstrable positive outcomes. To that end, Phase 1 of the Jurassic Coast Collection aims to introduce the project to key stakeholders and begin compiling evidence to demonstrate its value and meaning to the local community.

Phase 1 actions are as follows:

- Initial discussions with stakeholders to promote collaboration with the Jurassic Coast Collection and outline key, shared objectives and aspirations
- Meetings with representatives from all stakeholder groups to develop potential partnerships
- Introduction of the **Significance Assessment Process** to the Jurassic Coast Collection
- External promotion of the Jurassic Coast Collection among the wider public
- Inventory of fossils chosen for inclusion in the Jurassic Coast Collection
- Identification of curatorial support needed within an existing network of local museums
- Identification of opportunities and priorities for acquisition

Future actions and aspirations of the Jurassic Coast Collection

The future of the Jurassic Coast Collection is one of four strategic work streams drawn from the Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan. Aspirations for the project aim to promote the identity and heritage values of the World Heritage Site and secure the Site's position at the forefront of geological and palaeontological discovery and innovation. Future aims and objectives of the Jurassic Coast Collection include (but are not limited to):

- Identification of opportunities and priorities for acquisition
- Recognition and support regarding capacity and funding requirements for priority acquisitions

- Introduction of skills development programmes for and continued support to local museums
- Opportunities for major palaeontological research initiatives, particularly any that support the OUV of the Site
- Review of the geographical collecting bias and review of collection bias in order to identify fossil groups or localities where more collecting effort is desirable
- Outreach, education and engagement programmes to promote the Jurassic Coast Collection and palaeontology of the World Heritage Site
- Opportunities for new facilities to support the Jurassic Coast Collection and make the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site a focus for global geological and palaeontological research
- Development of an online platform to showcase development of the Jurassic Coast Collection