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## The Biology Curator

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## Fenscore II: *the awakening*

Dear BCG colleagues...

We want to put an HLF bid together to update, extend and promote FENSCORE, all the things we've wanted but never done – because of the day job!

We are hoping to get a bid in during spring 2002 but we need a fast consultation **now** over what the priorities are – **so we want your help** if you have an interest in promoting knowledge and information about natural history collections.

In case you've forgotten the UK Natural History Collection Database based at Manchester, and soon, Nottingham, can be viewed at [www.man.ac.uk/fenscore](http://www.man.ac.uk/fenscore). ...; if you want to be kept informed of progress then you can subscribe to the FENSCORE mailing list from the website.

This database points to the vast majority of the UK natural science holding outside the national museums - we estimate some 100 Million specimens, more than held at the Natural History Museum in London!

### Some ideas

We wish to develop this database as both a research and life-long learning tool, by:

1. updating and expanding the range of data
2. linking the national database to local databases held locally, adding personal points of contact and expertise
3. improve the data structure to make searching more effective
4. create a front end that can be used by school students and mature students alike, that they want to use, by adding images and current information and links
5. promoting interest in detailed knowledge of natural history, especially UK natural history, by increasing the use of local collections by local people, developing local research and data validation projects and identification

6. expertise.  
identify orphan collections that need immediate rescue, and the new collections being made by active living naturalists that could be potential museum collections of the future.
7. Promoting the use of the FENSCORE data, seeking links with like websites etc
8. Identifying value-added products, e.g. specialist summaries of the national holdings of taxonomic groups.
9. Identifying the means of long-term maintenance of the FENSCORE data to protect and promote the national resource with local collections.

We have had initial discussions with the National Biodiversity Network who recognize the importance of local collections and we will want to facilitate the use of collections within the NBN as a priority. We shall be having further discussions with them early in 2002.

### How you can help

We'd be grateful for any comments and ideas. This is an important attempt at improving access to your collections from a national database so please send your comments and ideas to the email addresses below or the FENSCORE mailing list above. We want to get our initial ideas together by Christmas so contact by **24<sup>th</sup> December 2001** would be the most helpful, especially about local community connections and use of your collections.

### thanks

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## Request for Information

The Natural Sciences section at Leicester City Museums were recently approached by the Bursar of Uppingham School, Rutland