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Epilogue: The 2011 Hearst Philippine Biodiversity Expedition

The early history of the California Academy of Sciences took place during the tumultuous and often flamboyant California Gold Rush in the mid nineteenth century. In the latter half of that century, the Academy's research, publications, and presentations were primarily focused on the natural history — geology, fossils, and the flora and fauna — of the young state of California (Ewan 1955; Leviton and Aldrich 1997; Leviton et al. 2010). By the early twentieth century, the geographic scope of research at the Academy had broadened to include other parts of western North America as well as the Galápagos Islands, and continued to expand to a global perspective throughout the century (Daniel 2008; McCosker 2007; Slevin 1959; Slevin and Leviton 1956; Williams 2007).

An example of the wide-ranging interests of scientists associated with the Academy in its first four decades as well as the early Academy as a center of scientific activity for the western United States is that of Alice Eastwood. In 1887, she was a twenty-eight year old high school teacher in Denver, Colorado and acted as a guide to visiting British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace in an exploration of the highest peak in the Colorado Front Range during the alpine flowering season of that year. Five years later, she was appointed as a joint curator of Botany at the California Academy of Sciences with Mary Brandegee (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:337; Raby 2001).

The Hearst Philippine Biodiversity Expedition of 2011 (Fig. 1) is an affirmation of the stalwart nature of the Academy's continuously successful history as a research institution. The contemporary and unfortunate state of affairs affecting various museums and other similar facilities has resulted in the marked curtailing or even discontinuation of scientific research activities at numerous institutions worldwide. In spite of this, research endeavors such as the Hearst Philippine Biodiversity Expedition and the great variety of diligent and enthusiastic individuals responsible for its successful fulfillment, provide hope and confidence for a brighter future regarding research at institutions such as the California Academy of Sciences.

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FIGURE 1. Southwestern Luzon, Philippines – region of the 2011 Hearst Philippine Biodiversity Expedition. A. Coral reef with the hard corals *Pectinia lactuca* (lower right) and *Platygyra lamellina* (upper left), Bethlehem dive site, Maricaban Island. B. Ridgetop vegetation with indigenous palms, southwestern coast of the Calumpan Peninsula. C. Sunset, Balayan Bay and the Verde Island Passage from the Calumpan Peninsula. Photos by G. C. Williams.