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MUSE U.M. NEWS

JULY 1996

No. 6

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM

RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Phil Wright collected a male **Cinnamon Teal** (*Anas cyanoptera*) from Powell County. This is the first male of this species in the Museum.

A **Red-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) that was hit by a car on I-90 in Missoula was recovered by Chad Olson. The hawk still had a vole in its talons.

Erick Greene donated the cavity nest of a **Lewis' Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes lewis*) collected in Missoula.

A **Sora** (*Porzana carolina*) was found dead in the parking lot at the Nine-mile Ranger Station by Virginia Vincent.

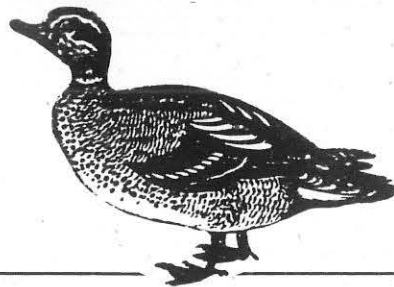
Kathy Williamson recovered an immature **Western Bluebird** (*Sialia mexicana*) that was killed by a cat in Missoula.

NEW EXHIBIT COMPLETED

The Museum has recently completed its second exhibit, this one on the second floor of the Botany Building. In the little-used display case, the exhibit is a collaboration between the Montana Natural History Center and the Museum. The exhibit highlights both the museum and herbarium, and objects from the University's biological collections are displayed. Also, and maybe most importantly, the exhibit discusses the value of biological collections. The section on the Natural History Center outlines their goals and diverse educational activities. We hope that this exhibit will stimulate thought on how the two organizations complement each other, and how they can collaborate in the future.

The exhibit was produced in large part by the efforts of Bryce Maxell, an intern in museum education and outreach with the Natural History Center and Zoological Museum. Bruce spent over 100 hours renovating the display case and producing the exhibit. Come have a look next time you're near the Botany Building!

The first exhibit produced, in the Health Science Building, is titled "Recent Acquisitions" and highlights new specimens acquired by the museum and herbarium. It shows that both institutions are active and are preserving biological specimens for a variety of uses, from teaching and research, to public service. Both exhibits also show that, for a modest cost, under used space in University buildings can be turned into interesting and educational displays for the university community.



MUSEUM OBJECTS ON LOAN

Many of the Museum's most unique specimens aren't housed at the museum or even on the UM campus. Due to the Museum's very limited storage capacity and the fact that these specimens can complement the exhibits or collections of other institutions, they are sent out on loan. There they can be safely housed and are often placed on public exhibit.

One example is our loan to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in Missoula. In 1990 they borrowed a full-mount of a complete bison, and two large elk head-mounts. The bison was collected by William Hornaday in 1886 when he was commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution to come to Montana and collect specimens of the then quickly-disappearing bison. This loan arrangement benefits both institutions. We obviously do not have current display or storage space for these large mounts, and they are important additions to the Elk Foundation exhibits.

In years past, there were fewer museums and people who worked in them tended to know each other. Loans were often arranged by "gentlemen's agreements" with little paperwork involved. Today, with many more museums, more staff, and more interchange of objects between museums it's imperative that legally binding loan agreements are in effect. Also, this spells out the rights of both the lending and borrowing institutions.

Recently, the Museum has undertaken a project to locate and sign loan agreements for all old loans from the Museum. We found that the Museum had out on loan such objects as a full-mount of Audubon's Sheep, an extinct subspecies of the Bighorn Sheep. This is on loan to the Valley County Pioneer Museum in Glasgow, MT. Audubon's Sheep originally lived in this part of eastern Montana and was first described in the journals of Lewis and Clark. Also, the Museum had loaned part of its outstanding collection of Russian Mammals to the Museum of Natural History at the University of Kansas. These specimens have been a useful addition to the research efforts at Kansas. However, the Russian mammal collection is one of the strengths of our museum and is part of the legacy of Dr. Robert Hoffmann's tenure at UM. He is now a high-ranking official at the Smithsonian. By signing a renewable loan agreement, Kansas can continue to use the specimens but be retain ownership and can keep our Russian collection intact.

In addition to loans for exhibits, other loans from our collection are made for research purposes. Public museums make their collections available for the entire scientific community. By borrowing specimens from a number of institutions, researchers can increase their sample size and the validity of their data. Museum loans are a two-way street. By accommodating museums which request specimens from us, we then can (and do) borrow specimens for our research projects and exhibits.