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Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum (UMZM)

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MUSE U.M. NEWS

OCTOBER 1996

No. 7

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM

RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Mike Maples donated an outstanding collection of Arctic birds. He prepared study-skins for the museum of birds he found dead at Point Barrow, Alaska. Several of these are unique to the museum.

Included are:

- Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsiil*)
- Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*)
- Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*)
- Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)
- Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)
- Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)
- Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)
- Black Guillemot (*Cephus grylle*)

Two owls from Idaho, a **Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*) and a **Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*), and a **Swainson's Hawk** (*Buteo swainsoni*) from Nevada were recovered by Chad Olson. These will be added to the teaching and research collections of the museum.

Dean Pearson and Kerry Foresman collected a rare specimen of the **Northern Bog Lemming** (*Synaptomys borealis*) from the Bitterroot National Forest, Ravalli County, Montana.

Jeff Marks and Phil Wright collected a **Cassin's Kingbird** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) from Rosebud County, Montana.

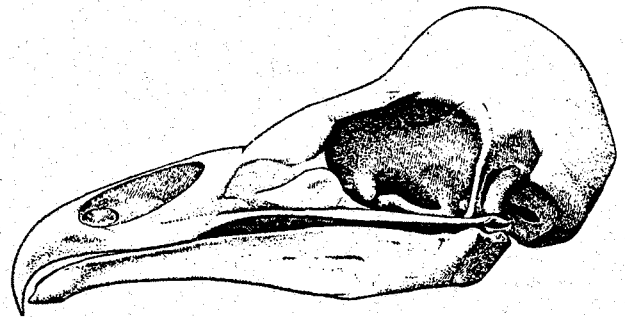
Phil Wright and Joyce Montreuil recovered a nest of the **Black-billed Magpie** (*Pica pica*). The protective canopy normally found on a Magpie nest was not present.

After driving through Wallace, Idaho, Penny Reynolds found a **Red-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo olivaceus*) dead in the grill of her truck and donated it to the museum.



IMPORTANCE OF VOUCHER SPECIMENS

Please see the reverse of this newsletter for an important reminder from the Association of Systematics Collections. They re-emphasize the importance of tagging research with scientific names as well as voucher specimens.



Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

CURRENT RESEARCH AT THE MUSEUM

Phil Wright is continuing his study of the rare birds of Montana. His work is nearing publication and would have been very difficult without a museum collection.

Susan deFrance of UM's Anthropology Department used the comparative skeletal collection to assist in her research of the zooarchaeology of an 18th century mission site in Texas.

Dave Dyer is continuing his work on the zooarchaeology of the Fort Atkinson site, an early 19th century fort on the Missouri River in Nebraska.

Michael Jacoby and Charles Robbins of Washington State University took small bone samples from our grizzly bear collection. They are looking at stable isotopes to analyze food habits of extinct and modern species of bears.

Patrick Lubinski of the University of Wisconsin studied our collection of known-age pronghorn to construct a guide to ageing pronghorn by tooth wear. Collections of known-age animals are rare, and the Museum's collection of pronghorn is unique in North America.

NEW MUSEUM STAFF & INTERNS

The new school year has brought with it a large turnover in museum staff. Returning employees are Heather Pier, who is continuing her work managing the Museum Preparation Lab; and Mary Ann Donovan, who worked over the summer in three different collections areas, and is now in charge of the Botany Greenhouse. Also, she is continuing to use the taxidermy skills that she developed over the summer by working in the lab.

New to the collections this year are Scott Hughes, who is doing a year-long internship in the Museum; Clark Watry, who is specializing in preparing study-skins and skeletal preparations of small mammals donated by the Montana Natural Heritage Program; and Erika Lindberg, who has been recently hired as the Herbarium Assistant. We are looking forward to a productive year and expect to make a significant impact in the backlog of specimens awaiting preparation.

Also, we are expanding the museum tour program this year by adding four new interns. Please help us welcome Cindy Adams, David Brink, Coral Conway, and Susan Stout. They will be responsible for marketing, scheduling, and conducting museum tours and related educational programming, recruiting and training volunteers, creating new activities and tour themes, and conducting a museum open house.

Labwork and Fieldwork Without Voucher Specimens Is Always Questionable!

ASC ALERT

- Current studies indicate “well studied” *Daphnia* “species” are polyspecific.
- What was considered two years ago to be a common and variable species of cutworm is now known to be 4 separate species.
- The *Rana pipiens* complex now consists of 20 species.

Systematics is a dynamic science that refines our understanding of species and their evolutionary relationships. This results in both new species names and changes in current names. Much research should therefore be tagged with both scientific names *and* voucher specimens. Failure to establish voucher specimens may present future workers with the problem: “Just which organisms were *you* working with?” Without voucher specimens, the results of much costly, time-consuming, and otherwise well-conducted research may be unsalvageable! For further information, consult:

- Choate, J. R. 1978. Revised minimal standards, and the systematic collections that meet them. *Journal of Mammalogy* 59:911-914.
- Dessauer, H. E. and M. S. Hafner. 1984. Collections of Frozen Tissues. Association of Systematics Collections. 74 pages.
- Knutson, L. 1984. “Voucher Material in Entomology: A Status Report” *Bulletin Entomological Society of America* 30:8-11.
- Lee, W. L., B. M. Bell and J. F. Sutton. 1982. Guidelines for Acquisition and Management of Biological Specimens. Association of Systematics Collections. 42 pages.
- MacInnis, A. J. 1983. Repositories for new species of helminths, protozoans, ticks, mites, etc., and voucher specimens from surveys of parasites. *Journal of Parasitology* 69:708.

Before You Write Your Next Research Grant, Consult an Appropriate Systematist or Museum Curator

ASSOCIATION OF SYSTEMATICS COLLECTIONS
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