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### MuseU.M. News, No. 10

University of Montana–Missoula. Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum

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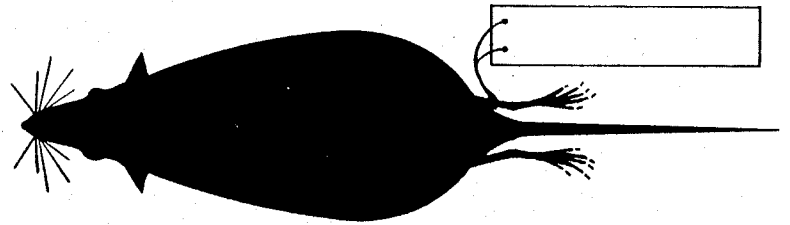
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# MUSE U.M. NEWS

OCTOBER 1997

No. 10

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PHILIP L. WRIGHT  
ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM - THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA



## RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Dr. Don Fawcett donated two skulls with horns of African bovids, recovered during his work in Africa. Included are the **Giant Eland** (*Taurotragus derbianus*) and **Roan Antelope** (*Hippotragus equinus*). The Giant Eland is now an endangered species. However, this specimen was collected before it was listed. Both are new species for the museum.

Two birds from Sheridan Co. were donated in May 1997. A **Red Knot** (*Calidris canutus*) collected by Ted Nordhagen and Jim Brown, and a **Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus sp.*) collected by Ted Nordhagen. The Red Knot represents the first record in the museum of this species.

An **Ancient Murrelet** (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) was found by Betty Cooper along the St. Regis River in Mineral Co. This is only the third record in the museum from Montana.

Mary Ann Donovan donated the skull of a **Llama** (*Lama glama*). This specimen is interesting in that it is only the second camelid in the collection, and it shows several major problems of the dentition. This will be a valuable instructional aid.

Diane Boyd witnessed and photographed an injured **Mountain Lion** (*Felis concolor*) near Glacier Park. Several weeks later she found the carcass of the lion and collected most of the skeleton for the museum. We will attempt to determine the injury present and the eventual cause of death.

## NEW COLLECTIONS STAFF AND INTERNS

Due to graduations and other factors, the new school year saw a complete turnover of museum collections staff. We welcome our new crew:

- Sundae Baker - Museum Intern
- Janis Bouma - Museum Technician
- Leslie Cole - Museum Preparation Lab - Small mammal preparation
- Beth Kampschror - Botany Greenhouse
- Deborah Stout - Herbarium Technician
- Heidimarie Whelan-Panaro - Museum Preparation Lab - Bird, mammal, and skeletal preparation

We also have a new group of interns who are in charge of the museum tour and outreach program. This program is jointly supervised by the Zoological Museum and the Montana Natural History Program. Our new interns are: Kelly Glade, Jay Nichols, and Lorraine Stock.

## THE MUSEUM AS A SOURCE FOR INFORMATION

You're a high school science teacher, and you have an animal to be cleaned so that the skeleton may be articulated for an exhibit.. you're the curator of a small museum in rural eastern Montana and you have a problem with moths damaging items in your exhibit ..or you are researching a particular species and need to know what specimens have been collected in the Northern Rockies during the last one hundred years. The answers to these and many more questions have been found by contacting the Zoological Museum and Herbarium at UM.

Previous articles in this series have discussed the museum's involvement in identifying vertebrate skeletal remains from the State Crime Lab, archaeological sites, and brought in by the public. The museum assists with these types of inquiries and many more. In an average year the museum and herbarium will respond to over 120 requests for information. Questions that are more appropriate to another institution, or to a faculty member, are forwarded. The most frequent inquiry over the last few years concerns our flesh-eating dermestid beetles that we use to prepare skeletal specimens. (In one recent month there were six requests for information about dermestids!) More and more institutions, as well as taxidermists and private collectors, are establishing colonies and contacting the museum for information on beginning and maintaining a beetle colony.

There is no end to the variety of calls received. We've had an art student looking for a human ribcage for an art project, to someone asking if we knew what a 24 foot white python skin is worth, and probably the oddest of all, an agency in Tennessee needing assistance with a forensic case involving a cow that was "mysteriously killed and buried."

In addition to answering general questions, each year the museum and herbarium receive about 65 total visitors using the collections for research purposes, about 20 requests for loans, and conduct 15 tours reaching over 500 people. Both collections are rich sources of information, and responding to requests from the public and other agencies helps fulfill the outreach mission of the museum and of the university.

