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Winter 2002

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MUSEU.M. NEWS

WINTER 2002

No. 19

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

RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Sherrie Wright, of DBS, donated the skulls of a **Sea Otter** (*Enhydra lutris*) and a **Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Both were collected by her father, Richard Barbe, in Alaska in the late 1960's. The transfer of these endangered species was authorized by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Graham Frye recovered two birds for the museum that he found in Teton Co.; a **Northern Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*) and a **Loggerhead Shrike** (*Lanius ludovicianus*).

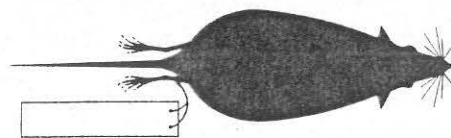
A **Pileated Woodpecker** (*Drycopus pileatus*) was brought in by Bob Rich. He found it lying dead in the South Hills neighborhood of Missoula.

Chris Funk, of DBS, added to our Montana reptile collection by collecting two snakes that he found while doing fieldwork in Sanders County. They are a **Gopher Snake** (*Pituophis catenifer*) and a **Rubber Boa** (*Charina bottae*).

The **Neil Perry Collection of small mammals** from the Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Sheridan Co., was transferred to the museum for preparation of skins and skulls. This is a valuable collection from the northeast corner of Montana, and will likely contain some county and state records.

Les Marcum, of UM Forestry, recovered two birds than simultaneously hit a window in Missoula. Apparently a **Northern Pygmy Owl** (*Glaucidium gnoma*) was chasing a **Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*) when both slammed into the window and died.

Chris Templeton brought in a juvenile **Ruffed Grouse** (*Bonasa umbellus*) that was a window-kill at McGill Hall on the U.M. Campus.



DENNIS L. FLATH COLLECTION COMES TO UMZM

Dennis L. Flath recently donated to the museum the extensive mammal collections that he made during his many years of service as the non-game biologist for Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Numbering approximately 2500 specimens, the collection consists of study skins and skulls of mammals from across Montana. The collection is especially strong in rodents and shrews, but also contains bats, lagomorphs, and carnivores. A preliminary examination of the collection uncovered several valuable state and county records, and we expect to come across many more as we sort, catalog, and label the collection.

One outstanding feature of the collection is the complete data that Dennis gathered as he was collecting and preparing the specimens. Full locality data are present, as well as habitat information, lengths and weights, and reproductive data. This type of detailed information is what separates a simple study skin or skull from a quality research specimen.

This acquisition further solidifies the position of the Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum as the premiere zoological collection in Montana, and one of the top collections representing the Northern Rocky Mountain region. The museum's teaching and research collection of vertebrates now consists of over 24,000 specimens of mammals, birds, herpetiles, and fish. We thank Dennis for this outstanding collection, and we are pleased that the Zoological Museum can serve as a permanent repository for Dennis' collection.

THE BUGS ARE BACK!

After losing our entire dermestid beetle colony last summer to a mite infestation, a new colony is now up and running thanks to a starter colony donated by Skulls Unlimited International. The beetle larvae are once again working hard preparing high-quality skeletal specimens for the museum's collections.

