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Letters

Changes at the Association of Systematics Collections, USA

Dear Dr Mathias,

This letter is to introduce myself as office manager of the Association of Systematics Collections, as well as to bring you up to date regarding some information mentioned in Biology Curators' Group "Newsletter", Vol.4, No.6.

On October 1st, 1986, the ASC relocated to Washington, D.C., and subsequently there has been a turnover in staff. Dr Stephen R. Edwards, past Executive Director, is now Executive Officer of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN in Gland, Switzerland. The position of Executive Director has been filled by Dr J. Elaine Hoagland, formerly of Lehigh University, where she held the position of Senior Research Scientist. Dr Richard Schrock, formerly Assistant Director of ASC, has taken a position at Emporia State University in Kansas. His position has been filled by Dr Lincoln Fairchild, formerly Director of the Bohrer bioacoustics Laboratory at the Ohio State University. Myself, Briece R. Edwards, was formerly at the University of Kansas.

The price of the CITES Identification Manual has been increased to \$275.00 US, due to the state of the dollar on the international market, as well as an increase in postage. If these changes (address, personnel, and cost of the CITES Manual) could be noted in your next Newsletter it would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours

Briece R. Edwards
Office Manager
730 11th Street, N.W.
Third Floor
Washington DC 20001
USA

Dear John

The attached letter was found recently during file sorting. It is particularly interesting now because of growing concern over the fate of the Black Rhino which is threatened with extinction in the wild as a result of poaching. The price then offered for the horn was £1 per pound which compares with a present black market value of something like £15,000 for a good specimen - much greater than ivory (Black Rhino - the Last Stand, Channel 4, 7.15pm, 25 October 1987). It is worth considering this value, and that of other marketable rarities, when assessing security and insurance needs - theft of rhino horn from a British museum is likely to result only in a fine - in Zimbabwe poachers face possible death.

The October issue of World Wildlife Fund News informs us that the United Arab Emirates, the main market for rhino horn, is due to withdraw from CITES in January 1988, at a time when the convention are increasing their efforts to stop the illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn.

Simon J Knell
Keeper of Natural Sciences
Borough Museum and Art Gallery
Oswald Road
Scunthorpe
South Humberside
DN15 7BD

The letter Simon sent was from Arthur Manning Ltd, Importers and Exporters of Animal By-Products, Twickenham, Middlesex and dated 26 September 1958.

"We have recently purchased from other Museums Rhinoceros Horns, surplus to their requirements, and we wonder whether you have any which you would care to dispose of. For Horns in fair condition, we are ready to pay 20/-d. per lb.
Awaiting your further news,

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Manning

The following letter has been circulated by the police investigating the theft of British Butterflies and Moths from Bristol Museum. Anne Hollowell, Curator of Natural History at Bristol, has asked that any response by BCG members be made initially to her at the Museum, and by letter not telephone.

Dear Sir,

We are currently investigating the theft of a large number of British Butterflies and Moths from the Bristol City Museum between 1983 and 1986.

Most of the Butterflies and Moths are from the collections of BARTLETT, CONEY, LODGE, BLATCHFORD and NOROGROVE and all have data labels bearing the location and date taken, along with the name of the collector. These are either hand-written or typed.

If you have been offered or sold any specimens of British Butterflies or Moths, especially of species which are now extinct, or of a rare or collectable nature, or of any unusual aberration or have any other information regarding the theft of the Butterflies and Moths, please contact me on the following telephone number.

Yours faithfully,

M Lewis
Detective Constable 525
Criminal Investigation Department
Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Central Police Station
Nelson Street
Bristol 1 Tel: (0272) 277777 ext 7161