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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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type; author; title; source; page numbers; language; abstract; subject keywords (which the initial search interrogates). The latter category gives clues as to which other keywords might prove useful in further searches.

Although I approached this exercise with some scepticism, thinking that biology as a discipline has been poorly served by the conservation community in recent years, I was surprised to find so many references to biological (and, incidentally, geological) sources. There are many obvious gaps in the coverage, but perhaps BCG should be pressing to fill these, linking with the Network through The Conservation Unit at MGC. In the meantime, I can recommend that biological conservators try to arrange access to the Network and make use of its obvious advantages.

John Mathias
Editor

MDA TERMINOLOGY GROUP - BIOLOGICAL DATA STANDARDS

I have received the following examples of data standards for biological objects, and my thanks go to the following members for responding so promptly:

Margaret Reilly, Hunterian Museum, Glasgow
Bill Pettit, Manchester Museum
Nick Moyes, (ex Kirklees) Derby Museum
Bob Allkin, Kew

Clearly the next step is to prepare a set of standards for new/future users, using the above as examples. This is quite a large job and requires a volunteer to co-ordinate and liaise with MDA Terminology Group. I have applied to MDA for a small grant/bursary for someone to undertake this work, and I await their answer.

Derek Whiteley
Secretary

BIOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS UK

This report was officially launched by the Museums Association on 4th August 1988 and elicited a sympathetic response from the quality press - notably the Independent and Guardian. It is expensive to buy, but BCG has received a complimentary copy from the Museums Association. I propose that this copy is made available for circulation on a short-loan basis to members of BCG who would like to see it. It is quite heavy (600+ A5 pages), so return postage would be appreciated.

Please apply to:
BCG Secretary,
Derek Whiteley,
City Museum,
Sheffield S10 2TP

FOR LOVE OF BIRDS

An exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds which was founded in Didsbury, Manchester in 1889.

This exhibition is available for hire from 1 July 1989 to 31 December 1990.

The exhibition looks at the history of the RSPB and bird conservation from 1889 to the present. It is produced by Bolton Museum and will be hired through NWMAGS to museums around Britain.

If any museums are interested please contact Steve Garland, Bolton Museum, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton BL1 1SE (tel: (0204) 22311 ext 2211) for further details.

BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*)

The Dorman Museum was fortunate enough recently to receive a donation of a Black Kite specimen from Mr David J Britton, on 20th May 1988.

Three recorded sightings have been made in April and May this year of Black Kites around the Teesmouth area. Mr Britton actually sighted a Kite at the South Gare of the Tees on 5th May 1988 and continued to observe it over about five days. As all sightings were made around the same area, it may have been the same bird, although this can only be speculation. It is certainly interesting to think that more than one Kite has visited Cleveland in such a short space of time, particularly as this specimen is the first record for Cleveland. The Black Kite is a national rarity, although Martin Blick (ornithologist with the Cleveland Nature Conservation Trust) informs me that several Black Kites have been seen further south this year, along with the usual Red Kites.

The specimen now in the museum was found dead on the tide line at Teesmouth by John Wilmot on 18th May. It was thought to have been dead about a week. The bird has been identified by Chris Brown (Cleveland Group RSPB leader) and David Britton (Member of the British Birds Rarities Committee) who has photographed and described it for submission to the Committee.

Due to its rarity, the museum specimen is being mounted as soon as possible. A NEMS grant has been obtained towards the cost of taxidermy and Eric Morton, taxidermist at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle is carrying out this work. The Kite will then be added to the Dorman Museum permanent collection and, hopefully, will be available for inspection by museum professionals and other bona fide enquirers, if not put on display. Enquiries should be directed to the Museum's Curator.

Leigh Lampard
Assistant Curator, Kirkleatham Museum
(formerly at Dorman Museum)