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Title: History and Value of the Malacological Collections of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences

Author(s): Van Goethem, J. L. & Backeljau, T.

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locating, and then assessing, all institutionally held collections in the geographical region of North West England. It transpired there are 8.7 million specimens held in 60 institutions. Participants, all working curators, divided the region between them, and using specially designed forms recorded the number of specimens found and their discipline. The surveyors looked at the quality of store-rooms and of individual cabinets, at the computer documentation, and at the percentage of specimens with data together with the precision of that data.

21 different surveyors using these forms over a prolonged period resulted in some standardisation problems, notably where qualitative judgements such as label assessment were concerned. However, the results from this low direct-cost approach, as opposed to the higher cost of employing one paid surveyor, seem satisfactory because it was possible to devise statistical methods to analyse the information gathered to give results that the institutions involved generally agreed were about correct.

Money, being limited, must be targeted by ranking collections on their potential usefulness. Display and educational potential are very difficult to assess, eg. a non-data specimen of little value to a large museum may have considerable value in a small museum educational operation.

Scientific potential can be assessed by the statistical treatment of information about overall quality of label information or rarity of the specimen in museum collections.

The methodologies can be improved and ranking measures in particular require further testing, but the NWCRU survey suggests strongly that it is feasible to arrive at defensible figures for costing collection care for large geographical areas and to rank collections to prioritise resource allocations.

The NWCRU survey is obtainable from the North West Museums Service, Griffin Lodge, Blackburn BB1 7AJ, UK.

THE CULTURE COLLECTION OF ALGAE AND PROTOZOA - A LIVING RESOURCE.

Dr J.G. Day

[See full paper below]

FINANCIAL VALUE OF NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS OF MUSEU DE CIENCIAS NATURAIS, FUNDACAO ZOBOTANICA DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, BRASIL.

Dr Maria Helena M. Galileo, Vera Lucia M. Callegaro, Vera Lucia I. Pittoni, Museu de Ciencias Naturais, Fundacao Zoobotanica do Rio Grande do Sul, Caixa Postal 1188, CEP 90001-970 Porto Alegre RS, Brasil.

The "Museu de Ciencias Naturais (MCN), Fundacao Zoobotanico", Porto Alegre, is the Rio Grande do Sul State Natural History Museum. Regional and national botanical and zoological surveys have been carried out by the Museum staff ever since its foundation in 1955. The research for the knowledge of biodiversity and the exchange activities provide a continued expansion of its scientific collections. Other activities carried out by the staff include editing of the scientific periodical *Iheringia*, promotions and organisation

of public expositions, and consulting services in the fields of planning and monitoring the management of protected areas.

The classical financial undervaluation of the scientific collections caused a serious imbalance between the gains and profits figures (here including the patrimonial gains) in the Annual Financial Report of the Museum, and this seriously compromised the approval of next year's proposed budget. The staff were thus forced to provide an up-to-date financial value for the Museum Collections. The criteria for this monetary valuation is based on the cost of acquisitions, amount of types, geographical coverage, species diversity, and prices available in laboratory collections catalogues. The 303,456 catalogue entries in the MCN scientific collections are presently evaluated to a total of US\$ 8,663,882. However, this amount doesn't correspond to its scientific value.

HISTORY AND VALUE OF THE MALACOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS OF THE ROYAL BELGIAN INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCES.

Dr Jackie L. Van Goethem & Dr T. Backeljau, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Vautierstraat 29, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium.

Shortly after the foundation of the Institute in 1846, mollusc specimens and collections were inventorized. Much of this material already existed for decades in private hands. The oldest specimens so far traced date from 1789. The general mollusc collection grew rapidly and still grows, as a result of gifts, explorations, purchase and exchange. Wet material dates from the beginning of the 20th century. Important acquisitions resulted from expeditions e.g. MERCATOR (1935-1938), Hydrobiological Exploration of Lake Tanganyika (1946-1947), MBIZI (1948-1949), Explorations of the National Parcs of Zaire (1933-1957) and more recently from expeditions in Papua New Guinea (1976-1994). The estimated total number of records of the world wide collection exceeds 300,000. Over the last decade the mean annual growth varied in the order of 1-2%.

Belgian material is kept separately. The oldest samples date from the beginning of the 19th century. An important marine collection resulted from the explorations of the North Sea by G. GILSON (1898-1925). Regarding non-marine molluscs, in the 1930's and 40's and again in the 70's and 80's huge numbers of live specimens were sampled throughout the Belgian territory. At present 53,000 records of Belgian non-marine molluscs are computerized.

In June 1935, the Institute purchased the Ph. Dautzenberg collection. It contains 32,000 recent and 7,000 fossil mollusc species and more than 6,000 named varieties and subspecies. This collection is of utmost importance not only because of its size, but also because it contains a very high number of voucher specimens including types of nearly 1,900 taxa named by Ph. Dautzenberg himself. The total number of records is in the order of 400,000. Together with this collection, an invaluable malacological library with 7,957 titles was acquired.

The total number of mollusc specimens in the R.B.I.N.S. collection exceeds 9 million, arranged in more than 700,000 samples. A reference collection of this size is an excellent tool for developing malacological research. A review of users of the collection is given.