

Zoological collection

- part of the University of Rostock since 1775

The Zoological Collection of the University of Rostock (ZSRO) is an important part of the Department of General & Systematic Zoology. The department is situated within the Institute of Biological Sciences on one of the most beautiful squares in the city. The collection was founded in the year 1775 and is one of the university's oldest permanent institutions. Many exhibits are of international value for research and education in the field of phylogenetics, systematics and biodiversity. The collection contains about 500 holotypes, the reference specimens for the first description and denomination of animal species. Access to the collection via an electronic database and printed catalogues is subject to a continuous process of improvement.



Highlights and areas of emphasis

The **highlights** of the collection are the famous Mecklenburg White Stork ('Arrow Stork') of 1822, which provided the first evidence for the long-distance migration of birds, reference specimens from the earliest scientific anatomical work on the river manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*), two ichthyosaurs from Holzmaden, Australian animals from the botanist baron Sir Ferdinand von Müller (1825-1896), reptiles and amphibians from the businessman T. Cordua (1796-1857), a native of Laage, and material from the first German deep-sea expedition. The collection of molluscs founded in the 18th century, with type material stemming from H.F. Link and material on freshwater mussels from the West Palearctic collected by R. Kinzelbach, is of international importance.

There are glass models of animals by the world-renowned firm Blaschka and wax models made by the German firm Ziegler acquired by F. E. Schulze. Artistic wall charts of animals created by R. Leukart with the aid of some professors from Rostock are abundant in our collection. The **inventory** has now grown to approximately 100,000 series. The emphasis of the collection is on aquatic animals, fishes, molluscs, birds and insects. The most important reference collections from recent times are of bristle worms (Polychaeta) collected by A. Bick, crustaceans collected by S. Richter, insects, scorpions and molluscs collected by R. Kinzelbach and H. Pohl, arachnids (Araneae) collected by J. Haupt, and fishes collected by H. Winkler. Our bird collection has recently been enhanced by liquidated historical collections from elsewhere and by skeletons from new material



Development of the collection

Recently, the stock of the collection has been expanded to take into account research currently being conducted in our department on birds and fishes, among vertebrates, and on crustaceans, polychaetes, molluscs and other marine invertebrates. Historical material, on molluscs and scorpions in particular, has been edited and made available again. From the beginning, the idea behind the collection has been research activity with an educational approach. It is integrated into the activities of the Department of General & Systematic Zoology. Some of the material was used in the 78 dissertations and 20 PhD theses the department produced between 1995 and 2007, and in 4 habilitations.



Functions of the collection

In accordance with the basic concept of university education, the collection covers the whole animal kingdom and includes specimens from all over the world. The collection fulfills various roles. It is a:

- research collection containing material from all over the world for taxonomic study and the description of new species
- collection for university education (anatomy, morphology, histology, material science)
- public natural history collection in Rostock's "cultural mile"
- collection of voucher specimens from the Baltic Sea and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

The original animal samples are appropriately prepared, including for genetic research, and thus made accessible for study. About 500 holotypes are available, as well as paratypes and other material. All the biographical data of the persons involved (collectors, donors, scientists) are collected, in an approach which links natural history with cultural history.



Situation und perspectives

The Zoological Collection of the University of Rostock collaborates with various natural history and conservation groups, including the 'Vereinigung der Freunde der Naturgeschichte in Mecklenburg', sections of the 'Naturschutzbund Deutschland' (NABU) and with the 'Gesellschaft für Geschiebekunde'. Guest researchers are always welcome. Please bequeath to us your personal collections in the spirit of conserving our national heritage, both natural and cultural. They will be well cared for and used for at least another 232 years. We can guarantee appropriate preservation and management, and can also offer an electronic cataloguing and advisory service for objects remaining at their original site.

The Zoological Collection is a member of the German Association of Museums.

Donations are much needed and welcome. Bank details: BBK Schwerin, bank identification code 140 000 00, account number 140 015 18.



Addresses and contact

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Opening hours: The exhibition room on the first floor is open from Monday to Thursday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., and on Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please make an appointment for a guided tour through the historic sections of the collection (maximum 16 people) with Norma Schmitz (Tel.: + 49 3814986281, norma.schmitz@uni-rostock.de).

Lectures: See the public announcements and notices.

Museum shop: Postcards and information sheets on particular objects available.

UNIVERSITY OF ROSTOCK Zoological Collection



Institute for Biological Sciences
General & Systematic Zoology