
MUSEUM NEWS

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

Spring 2010

No. 32

Museum Receives Wolf Specimens from US F&W

We were excited this winter to receive a large collection of wolf specimens from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Wyoming. These were animals that had been in the freezers of the US F&W Service and had been ear-marked for educational and research facilities. We rarely get a chance to acquire wolf specimens and we jumped at the chance to add these to the museum!

The only drawback was that we had to prepare the specimens ourselves! The F&W truck arrived with 5 roughed-out hides, two with skulls still inside, and 10 complete heads. We had no available freezer space so we had to act fast! DBS and the Friends of the P.L. Wright Museum agreed to donate the cost of tanning the hides, so we took the five hides immediately to the taxidermist. We received pelts in a variety of coat colors, from light to dark, reflecting the diversity of pelage colors seen in wolves. Then our awesome crew of work-study students, interns, and volunteers jumped in to help prep all the skulls for the dermestid colony. It was a flurry of activity for a week but we got all the heads finished up.

Thanks to all those who pitched in and gave of their time to help: Brandy Wallace, Emma Young, Tess Kreofsky, and Emily Meneghin Trudeau. Thanks also to Kerry Foresman of DBS and to Mike Jimenez of the US F&W Service for expediting the donation.

These skulls and tanned pelts, all from northwestern Wyoming, are valuable additions to the teaching and research collections of the museum. These specimens will help generations of students cultivate an interest in wolves.

Small Mammal Collection from MNHP

Another project that kept us busy over the winter was preparing a large collection of small mammal specimens collected during the last two field seasons by the Montana Natural Heritage Program. The mammals came from two large research projects conducted by MNHP: the Diversity Monitoring Program and a survey of small mammals from the Upper Clark Fork region.

Under a reciprocal agreement, all specimens collected were given to the museum for preparation and then we returned four sets of specimens back to MNHP. These sets will be used as an identification resource by their field crews. MNHP funded the preparation of the specimens, and all items not needed by the field crews were given to the museum for the collections. It was a win-win situation for all! Plus this gave us funds to hire graduate student Brandy Wallace, who worked tirelessly for many months around a busy school schedule, preparing skins and skulls and training volunteer preparators. Brandy has personally prepared the majority of the 275 specimens finished to date.

Some of the interesting species acquired by this program include: **Ord's Kangaroo Rat** (*Dipodomys ordii*), **Hispid Pocket Mouse** (*Chaetodipus hispidus*), **Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel** (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*), **Northern Grasshopper Mouse** (*Onychomys leucogaster*), **Sagebrush Vole** (*Lemmiscus curtatus*), **Bushtail Woodrat** (*Neotoma cinerea*), and the **Water Shrew** (*Sorex palustris*).



More Recent Accessions

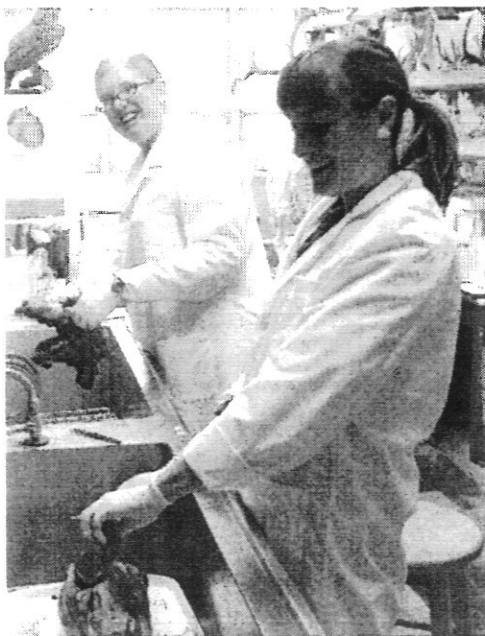
In addition to the wolves and small mammals discussed on page one, the museum has received its usual array of interesting specimens to add to the collections:

Dona Boggs, formerly of DBS, donated a collection of several items that were part of her father's natural history collection. These include: jaws with interlocking plate-like teeth of the **Cownose Ray** (*Myliobatidae* – *Rhinopterae*); pharyngeal teeth of a **Freshwater Drum** fish (*Aplodinotus grunniens*); skull of a **Dik-Dik** (*Madoqua* sp.) – a very small African bovid; and the fused cervical vertebrae of a toothed **whale** (*Odontoceti*). These specimens no sooner hit the table in the museum when Erick Greene spotted them and realized they would be perfect for his bio-mimicry lab. The museum is a great source of specimens for DBS courses. These unusual specimens must be seen to be appreciated, and they are now on exhibit in our Recent Accessions exhibit in the first floor of the Health Sciences Building.

The egg of a domestically raised **Emu** (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) was recently given to the museum by Adele Coon, a wildlife rehabilitator in Hamilton. Many people don't realize that the museum houses a large, historically important collection of bird eggs and nests.

The Anthropology Department of U.M. transferred to the museum two mostly complete bovid skeletons. One is a juvenile **Domestic Cattle** (*Bos taurus*) and the other is a neonate **cattle** or **bison** (*Bos* sp.). Though these are common species, the skeletons are important and useful additions to our comparative skeletal collection. They were used almost immediately in our comparative work with faunal specimens from historical archaeological sites.

Shannon Gilbert forwarded to the museum a nice series of wild canid skulls that she doggedly recovered from the Dillon area. Specimens represented are **Red Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*) and **Coyote** (*Canis latrans*). These skulls will be added to the teaching and research collections, and will complement the museum's outstanding collection of carnivore specimens.



Brandy Wallace and Tess Kreofsky preparing wolf skulls in the museum lab. Jan. 2010.

Research at the Museum

The museum has been a busy place in the last year. Not only are new collections coming in, but also there are more and more students and researchers using the collection for their graduate work and research projects. Here is a sampling from this year:

Hannah Cail – Thesis research on domestic dogs from archaeological sites.

Julie Betsch – PhD. student, Wildlife Biology. Study of prey species of jaguar.

Matt Dysart – Fauna of the Garnet Ghost Town site.

Jennifer Foust – just completed her thesis based on the museum's specimens: "The Use of Tooth Pit and Tooth/Jaw Measurements to Identify Carnivore Taxa Responsible for Damage on Scavenged Bone".

Paul Hendricks and Jeff Marks – Research for Birds of Montana book.

Lauren Richardson – Thesis research for preparation of a manual for forensic investigators to identify human versus non-human bones.

Lisa Smith – PhD. student, Anthropology Dept. Fauna of the Bridge River Archaeological Site.

Ryan Wendel – Western Cultural Co. Fauna of the Bannack Ghost Town site.

Wyatt Ward – Independent study project to create a comparative osteological collection of fish skeletons for the museum.

Friends of Museum Dues are DUE!

Please note that 2010-2012 membership renewals for the Friends of the Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum are now due! Use the membership form on the last page, and send in today! Dues are only \$25 for **two** years, and only \$15 for students.

We need your continued support! Though we don't have a promotional item to give to members this year, such as the calendar we produced in 2008, we still need each and every member to help support this fledgling Friends group. Please send in your membership renewal and also encourage your colleagues, students, and friends to join. Let's continue to support the active acquisitions, exhibit, and research programs of the museum.

Your support has already allowed us to make it possible to get the wolf hides tanned (see page one). Without support from the Friends, we likely would not have been able to acquire these unique hides for teaching and research. We know that exciting future projects will be assisted directly by your support.



Meet the Staff:

David Dyer – Curator
Emma Young – Museum Technician
Brandy Wallace – Preparation Lab
Charles Miller – Preparation Lab
Ahvi Potticary – Museum Intern
Wyatt Ward – Museum Intern
Tess Kreofsky – Museum Intern

www.zoologicalmuseum.dbs.umt.edu

YES, I want to become a member of the Friends of the P.L. Wright Zoological Museum!

<input type="checkbox"/> Student Member	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Member	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Member	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Honorarium Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Member	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Gift	\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Note that dues are for a period of **two** years! Checks should be made payable to:
U.M. Foundation/Friends of the Museum. All contributions to the *Friends* are tax
deductible to the full extent provided by law.

Send membership forms to: P.L. Wright Museum - Division of Biological Sciences -
The University of Montana - Missoula, Montana - 59812

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