

MUSE U.M. NEWS

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



Grizzly Bear exhibit in Ohio - 1930.

MUSEUM ACQUIRES THREE GRIZZLY BEARS

The Zoological Museum has just acquired three mounted grizzly bears donated by the museum of the Ohio Historical Society, Columbus. The bears are a family group consisting of a sow and a pair of two-year old cubs, and are mounted in a refreshingly life-like pose rather than the usual fangs-and-claws mounts. They were originally collected by William Rindsfoos, a Columbus business owner, who traveled to Alaska in 1930 to collect these bears specifically for the museum. The bear diorama was exhibited in Columbus for over 40 years. When the Historical Society moved to their new building in the early 1970's and new exhibits were being constructed, the bears were put in storage. Recently the Historical Society began looking for a new home for the mounts since they are not an Ohio species. These specimens are ideal for our museum, due to their significance to Montana and to the university. In June, Dave Dyer traveled to Ohio to construct crates for the bears and to arrange for their shipping to Montana.

For being almost 70 years old, the mounts are in beautiful condition. This can be explained in part because taxidermists used to routinely dust the insides of the hides of taxidermy specimens with arsenic. This did a great job of repelling damaging insect pests from the mounts, but wasn't too healthy for the taxidermists or today's museum curators. Before shipment, the bear mounts were tested and found to be positive for arsenic. We now always wear protective gear when handling any old taxidermy specimens.

The bears are currently housed at the Montana Natural History Center at Fort Missoula. In the future, we hope to build a collaborative exhibit with the Natural History Center featuring the grizzly bears. Eventually we hope to permanently exhibit the bears on the U.M. campus.

RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Jeff Marks recently collected several notable birds for the museum including: a **Plumbeous Vireo** (*Vireo plumbeus*) from Stillwater Co., the first record for this species in the museum; a **Prairie Warbler** (*Dendroica discolor*) from Lake Co., the first specimen in the museum from Montana; a **Gray Flycatcher** (*Empidonax wrightii*) from Beaverhead Co., the first state record for this species; and a **Bahama Woodstar** (*Calliphlox evelynae*) from, where else, the Bahamas; this is a new genus for the museum.

A complete skeleton of a **Moose** (*Alces alces*) was collected for the museum by David Dyer and Shannon Gilbert, thanks to a tip from Bryce Maxell. This is the first complete moose skeleton in the museum and is an important contribution to our comparative collection of large artiodactyls.

Marilyn Dundas recovered an **Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) that died after hitting wires on top of a telephone pole along Grant Creek. The bird was still clutching a fish in it's talons when it was brought to the museum.

A collection of **small mammals** from Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge was donated to the museum by Julie Fuller. Julie prepared all the skins and cleaned the skulls using the museum's dermestid colony.

Jeff Marks and Denver Holt helped recover for the museum a specimen of a **Western Screech Owl** (*Otus kennicottii*) that was originally found in Great Falls by Keith Reeves.

Carl Heine donated three specimens of **Bullnose Rays** (*Myliobatis freminvillei*) to the fish collection that he collected off the North Carolina coast.