

MUSE U.M. NEWS

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

RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Gene Miller, of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, donated an outstanding collection consisting of 12 **Bighorn Sheep** (*Ovis canadensis*) skulls, a large collection of **Artiodactyl fetuses**, and a complete **Black Bear** (*Ursus americanus*) skeleton. All were salvaged from road-killed and train-killed animals near Thompson Falls, MT. Thanks to Gene for his efforts in not only collecting these specimens but in preparing them as well.

Bart O'Gara donated an interesting collection of ten horn mounts of a variety of bovids. Included in this collection is a **Saiga** (*Saiga tatarica*), an **Ibex** (*Capra ibex*), a **Puku** (*Kobus vardoni*), and an **Asian Bighorn Sheep** (*Ovis ammon darwini*).

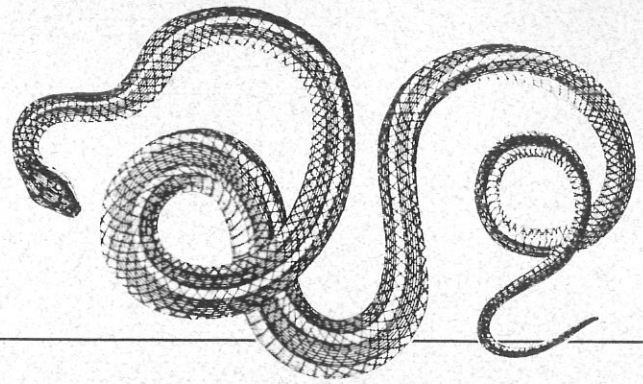
Thanks to Joseph Dulac for donating antler mounts of some unusual species including a **Fallow Deer** (*Dama dama*) and a **Roe Deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*).

John Atcheson, Jr. of Butte donated the horns and tanned hide of a **Transcaspian Urial Ram** (*Ovis orientalis arka*) that he collected in Kazakhstan in 1999.

A complete carcass of a **Domestic Pig** (*Sus scrofa*) was salvaged for the museum from a pig roast by Cheryl Bregen and Elizabeth Milburn. This skeleton is valuable as a comparative specimen when we identify bones from historic archaeological sites and forensic cases.

Robert Morgan of Sanders Co. salvaged a **Band-tailed Pigeon** (*Columba fasciata*) that had been seen earlier at his bird feeder. This is the first record in the museum from Montana.

Several large bones were found along the Tongue River in Montana and were turned into the Rosebud County Sheriff's Office. To rule out the possibility that they were human, the bones were sent to the U.M. Anthropology Dept. and Zoological Museum. We determined that the bones were the humerus, radius, and coracoid of the **American White Pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). They are now in the museum's collection.



MUSEUM FLUID COLLECTIONS ARE RESTORED

The museum's extensive collection of fluid preserved vertebrates is in the final stages of a major effort to not only rehouse the collections but to restore the fluids. Consisting of mostly fish, but also including herpetiles, mammals, and birds, the collection was moved last year from poor storage conditions in the basement of the Health Sciences Building to a room on the 4th floor. The fish were initially reorganized on the shelves in taxonomic order in the new room, and we are now replacing the old alcohol in many of the jars. Many of the old lids had either cracked or rusted through, and this allowed the alcohol, and in some cases formalin, to evaporate out of the jars. We also are replacing the old miscellaneous jars, such as peanut butter jars and baby food jars that have housed many of the specimens for years, with the new museum jars and lids. Several hundred new jars and about 50 gallons of new alcohol have been used so far. Thanks to the museum's intern Becky Campbell Bigley, who has done much of the work.

Another part of the project is to stabilize the shelf units with braces to prevent them from tipping over in the event of an earthquake. We will also include a brace in the front of each shelf since even a minor earthquake could cause jars to rattle off the shelves.

NEWS ITEMS FROM THE MUSEUM

All museum users and researchers are reminded to sign into the **Visitor's Log** just inside the museum's door. This provides important data as to who is using the collection and for what purpose. This is important for security reasons and provides information for grant proposals and annual reports.

The **Vertebrate Osteology** class through Continuing Education is well under way this semester. But where are all the biology students!? The majority of the students enrolled are from Anthropology. So keep this class in mind for next year and remind your students about it.

Recent **publications** and reports that have been based on the museum's collection include "Cranial morphometric and evolutionary relationships in the northern range of *Ovis canadensis*". J.D. Wehausen & R.R. Ramey II. 2000. Jour. Mamm. 81:145-161. and "Faunal remains from the Ft. Atkinson site, Washington Co., Nebraska". D.L. Dyer. 2000. Report to the Nebraska State Historical Society.