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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: The Anatomical Inventory Project of the American Ornithologists' Union

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Source: Mengel, M. J. (1981). The Anatomical Inventory Project of the American Ornithologists' Union. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter*, Vol 3 No 1, 59 - 61.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1872>

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THE ANATOMICAL INVENTORY PROJECT OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

For the last several years, the Committee on Collections of the American Ornithologists' Union has been inventorying the skeletal and fluid-preserved specimens of birds in North American collections. Although these specimens are valuable for many kinds of studies (including systematic ornithology, paleontology, archaeology, and functional anatomy), a number of species are not represented at all as anatomical specimens, and very few have long series of specimens. Workers often have trouble locating the specimens they need. Thus, we felt that such an inventory would be useful.

A large number of North American museums have co-operated with this project. Enclosed is a sample page of some of our early results. We are so encouraged with our progress that we are now attempting to add information for many other museums, throughout the world. Data for the British Museum have already been included. We very much hope that, if your collection contains either skeletal or fluid-preserved specimens, you will be able to participate in this project.

The inventory will probably be distributed as a computer print-out. This will mean that up-to-date copies will always be available at reasonable cost. Unfortunately, it would cost too much for us to be able to distribute them free.

We hope next to develop a list of all species that are not represented as skeletons or fluid-preserved specimens in any collection. Then we want to determine the geographic distribution of these species, to determine where collecting efforts should be concentrated, to maximize efforts at improving anatomical holdings. We will publish the results of this analysis.

We hope you agree that this project will benefit all ornithologists and that you can join us in the work. What we need is a list of how many skeletal specimens and how many fluid-preserved specimens you have of each species. For skeletons, we need to know if the specimen is essentially complete or is only a few elements.

We also hope you will be willing to give us the names and addresses of other collections in your country that might be able to provide information of this nature.

We would appreciate it if you could return the enclosed questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Marion J. Mengel, Chairman
Committee on Collections
American Ornithologists' Union.

ANATOMICAL INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

To: D. Scott Wood
Division of Birds
Carnegie Museum of Natural History
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213
USA

My collection has _____ avian skeletal specimens.
I hope to be able to send you information about how many complete
and partial skeletons we have for each species by _____
(date)

We have _____ fluid-preserved specimens of birds.
I hope to be able to send you information about how many we have
for each species by _____.
(date)

I would like for you to send me a list of the birds of the
world for me to record this information on _____.
(yes or no)

I am listing on the back of this letter the addresses of
other museums in my country that may have anatomical specimens of
birds and that might be able to participate in this project.

(Name--please print)

(Institution)

(Address)

SPECIES	MUSEUMS														
	TOTAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
CUTIA NIFALENSIS															
PTERUTHIUS RUFIVENTER															
FLAVISCAPIS	2					2									
XANTHOCHLORUS															
MELANOTIS															
AENOBAREUS															
CAMPSORFYNCHUS RUFULUS															
ACTINODURA EGERTONI															
RAMSAYI															
NIPALENSIS															
WALDENI															
SOULIEI															
MORRISONIANA	2							2							
MINLA CYANOCYPTERA	6			2											1
STRIGULA	6							2		2					2
IGNICTINCTA															
ALCIPPE CHRYSOTIS															
VARIEGATICEPS															
CINEREA															
CASTANECEPS	7							1		5					1
VINIPECTUS	2							1							1
STRIATICOLLIS															
RUFICAPILLA															
CINERICEPS															
RUFUGULARIS															
BRUNNEA	1														
BRUNNEICAUDA	8			3	4	1									
POICICEPHALA	8								4	4					
PYRRHOPTERA															
PERACENSIS															
MORRISONIA															
NIPALENSIS	24			5		1			2	5					
ABYSSINICA	3			2						1					
ATRICEPS															
LICPTILUS NIGRICAPILLUS	1														1
GILBERTI															
RUFOCINCTUS															
CHAPINI															
PAROPHASMA GALINIERI															
PHYLLANTHUS ATRIPENNIS															
CROCIAS LANGBIANIS															
ALBONOTATUS	1														1
HETEROPHASIA ANNECTENS															
CAPISTRATA	8			1	1		4								2
GRACILIS															
MELANOLEUCA															
AURICULARIS	1			1											
PULCHELLA															
PICACIDES	2														2
YUHINA CASIANICEPS	20														20

- 1 = ROYAL CNT MUS 9 = ERIT MUS NAT H 17 = SAN DIEGO MUS 25 = UNI
2 = UNIV KANSAS 10 = UNIV OKLAHOMA 18 = UNIV ARIZONA 26 = WAS
3 = UNIV MICHIGAN 11 = CARNEGIE MUS 19 = CAL ACAD SCI 27 =
4 = MUS VERT ZOOL 12 = UNIV S FLA 20 = CSU LONG BEACH 28 =
5 = AMER MUS NAT H 13 = MUS COMP ZOOL 21 = UC LOS ANGELES 29 =
6 = FLA ST MUS 14 = DELAWARE MUS 22 = MOORE LAB ZOOL 30 =
7 = YALE PEAB MUS 15 = WASH ST MUS 23 = ST EDNAVENTURE 31 =
8 = LA ST UNIV 16 = CORNELL UNIV 24 = UNIV NEW MEX 32 =