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Title: When were your collections collected?

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When were your collections collected?

As discussed in **Natural History Conservation**, no.4 (1989) 3-5, planning for the conservation of specimens needs knowledge about the numbers, types and requirements of the specimens. There is little hard information to back up the scattered personal experience of those caring for natural science collections. As a first step in addressing this question, I have gathered data on collections relating the category of specimen to the date of collection, ie the length of time it has been preserved. This may be correlated with the physical well being of the specimen, though the relationship has yet to be tested.

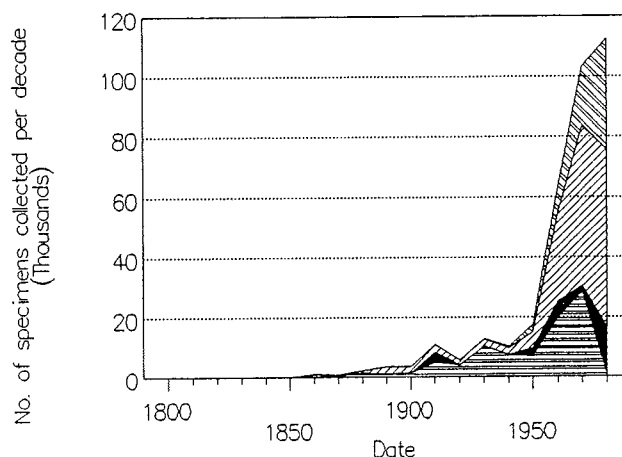
Information has been gathered from collections whose data is available in machine readable form. Some collections have achieved nearly 100% data capture while most others have far less. Data capture is only partial and idiosyncratic. The data have been amalgamated and summarised in the accompanying graphs, which show the considerable difference between collections, and presumably their problems, in contrasting countries, the United Kingdom and Australia. No data has been gathered from N America and very little from the rest of the world.

I am therefore requesting help. If you have or know of specimen data that can be easily abstracted in the form of number of specimens per decade (eg 1900-1909, I should be pleased to add the information to the data bank). The data is being collected in the smallest convenient subdivisions. For example, vertebrate data are divided into categories of reptiles, fish, mammals etc, and study skin, mounts, skeletal, spirit etc. Similar subdivisions are made in botany and earth sciences (including rocks, minerals, fossils).

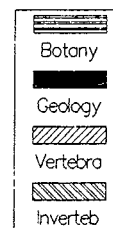
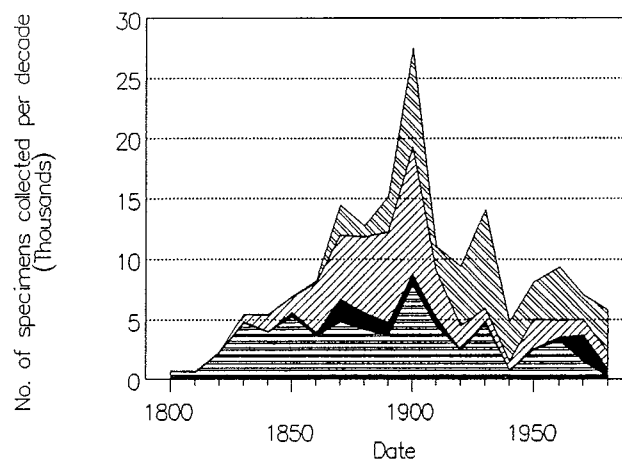
Acknowledgements

Data from Australian institutions came from: Tasmanian Museum (Mr D Greg), Queen Victoria Museum, Tasmania (Mrs L Beck), South Australian Museum, Adelaide (Miss L Queale), Queensland Herbarium (Mr R W Johnson), Queensland Museum (Mr P Jell), Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences (Mr C Jack-Hinton).

Natural Sciences collections (Aust.) Age profile



Natural Sciences collections (UK) Age profile



Data from UK museums came from:

Inverness Museum (Mr S Moran), The Hancock Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr P S Davis), Ipswich Museum (Miss S Dummer), The Manchester Museum (Mr C W Pettitt), Liverpool Museum (Mr P W Phillips).

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