

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM

MISSION AND STRATEGIES

2007-2009

THE MISSION –

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Zoological Museum was established to be a center for research and educational support for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It was likewise charged with acting as a depository for biological specimens and knowledge deriving from activities of State of Wisconsin agencies. It is dedicated to the preservation, study, and understanding of the vertebrate and aquatic fauna of Wisconsin, the Midwest, and other parts of the world. The Museum acquires, processes, accessions, and houses documented specimens resulting from field and laboratory research and the work of contributing agencies. The collections provide a library of primary information basic to studies of animal and human ecology, systematics and genetics, and morphology.

STRATEGIES

Zoological Museum Role in Research

The Zoological Museum acquires documented specimens, prepares them for long-term preservation, accessions and records them with field and laboratory data, houses and maintains them under proper environmental conditions, and provides access and technical assistance to scholars.

Objective 1. Facilitate research use by UW faculty and graduate students by providing access to specimens and original data from the collection.

Objective 2. Preserve voucher specimens proving documented identifications and allowing possibility of further use for specimens derived from field, laboratory, and animal behavior studies.

Objective 3. Create and maintain electronic and written records relating specimens to research programs from which they were derived.

Objective 4. Deposit and maintain field notes, reports, reprints, monographs, and books documenting use of Zoological Museum specimens.

Objective 5. Negotiate and obtain loans of specimens from non-UW institutions for UW research personnel (most institutions make loans to other museums, not to individuals, to guarantee oversight at the receiving institution).

Objective 6. Loan specimens with their data to scholars at other institutions for appropriate examination and use.

Objective 7. Accession and maintain documented specimens from researchers at other institutions when the projects are directly related to Zoological Museum collections or UW zoological research.

Objective 8. Encourage exchange of specimens with other institutions to increase collection breadth and diversity.

Objective 9. Actively encourage and facilitate collaboration and cooperation with other institutions, offering specimens, data, and technical assistance and avoiding duplication of effort.

Support for Instruction

The Zoological Museum will provide specimens, information, and instructional assistance for appropriate courses in several Colleges including Letters and Science, Agriculture and Life Sciences, Education, and School of Veterinary Medicine and will likewise support appropriate instructional outreach throughout the state.

Objective 1. Provide specimens for demonstration in lecture and classes and for student examination in laboratories, making possible their handling of a wide diversity of actual specimens rather than depending on photographs, electronic images, or descriptions.

Objective 2. Provide technical assistance of museum personnel to professors, teaching assistants, and course coordinators by organizing and setting up laboratories using zoological museum specimens.

Objective 3. Offer specialized lectures to courses where expertise of Museum personnel can add depth and diversity to a course offering.

Objective 4. Make loans of specimens to other University of Wisconsin campuses and universities elsewhere, for class demonstrations and small exhibits; provide to

other state agencies assistance and specimens for making of temporary and special-purpose exhibits.

Objective 5. Prepare exhibits and labeling for small exhibits in Birge and Noland Halls (UW), responsive to the needs of undergraduate classes.

Zoological Museum as State of Wisconsin Repository

The Museum holdings have derived from field and laboratory studies conducted for over a century by professors and graduate students in the biological fields, primarily at the University of Wisconsin, as well as by researchers in Wisconsin state and federal agencies *e.g.* Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Agriculture- Animal Health Laboratory, and National Wildlife Health Center. As a land grant institution, the University has been and is obligated to study and promote the development of natural and agricultural resources of the state; the research museums of the campus are repositories documenting by vouchers those studies which have described the historical changes affecting natural and urban landscapes and agricultural lands. These collections, reflecting the history of the state since the 1840's, have made possible crucial biological comparisons relating to environmental modification and degradation within the state and the region; they also provide the comparative specimens for archeological study of food resource use within Wisconsin, the Central States, and northern Latin America.

Objective 1. Acquire and accession voucher research specimens from University of Wisconsin field and laboratory studies of terrestrial vertebrates and aquatic organisms.

Objective 2. Accept and accession research specimens deriving from Wisconsin state-mandated research by the Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Objective 3. Act as the Wisconsin and federal depository for certain endangered vertebrates.

Objective 4. Supply documented samples of vertebrate tissues for systematic and genetic studies and bioecological analysis.

Objective 5. Provide access, technical assistance, and workspace to local and visiting research personnel utilizing Zoological Museum specimens and data.

Objective 6. Maintain all collections in proper preservation environment, with continuing attention to threats from pests, moisture, improper storage or handling.

Objective 7. Produce and maintain all specimen accession records, related data and references for efficient retrieval.

Objective 8. Duplicate in electronic format specimen data for all collections, making those data available for public access on the Museum web site.

Zoological Museum as a Public Trust

The University of Wisconsin Zoological Museum is rooted in the original Natural History Cabinet, mandated by the University Board of Regents in their first meeting of October 7, 1848. Eventually, collections, such as the State Herbarium, the Geology Museum, the Entomology Research Collection, and the UW Zoological Museum became the principal depositories for various state agencies including the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, and the Geological and Natural History Surveys. With the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, the Zoological Museum was charged as repository for a number of endangered species. Therefore, the Museum personnel must act for and on behalf of the public. Museum staff members work with educators at all levels, create exhibits, and provide consultation for the public.

Objective 1: Offer instruction to University course instructors as well as public school teachers, in order to enhance student understanding of the zoological world, using actual specimens, visual aids, and library resources.

Objective 2: Provide accurate identification of specimens for researchers and graduate students and an identification service for the general public.

Objective 3: Provide interagency consultation and identification verifications for state and federal agencies (e.g. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Historical Society, Department of Public Health, United States Fish and Wildlife Service).

Objective 4: Provide tissue samples and anatomical materials for research and instruction (eg. UW School of Veterinary Medicine and the UW Medical School).

Objective 5: Prepare and display exhibits for University instruction and the general public.

Objective 6: Provide occasional lectures and naturalist training to outside groups concerned with ecological and conservation issues.

Objective 7: Provide demonstrations, discussions, and short presentations for primary and secondary school groups.

Objective 8: Provide occasional guidance for UW Alumni groups traveling to destinations where the experience of Museum personnel has provided appropriate background.