

The History of the bird collection of the Museum of Zoology, Kazan State University

Tatyana VODOLAJSKAYA

Department of Zoology, Kazan State University, Russia

SUMMARY

An exceptional number of seven museums belong to the Kazan State University. They are the heritage of former university generations, their spiritual legacy and tradition.

The start of the museums dates back to the first years that the Kazan University existed. According to the Charter of 1804, the Department of Natural History and the Department of Minerals were formed, which were the basis of the museums of Geology, Mineralogy, Botany and Zoology of our days. The museums are internationally acknowledged. The information about their collections is presented in international catalogues and reference books.

The first head of the Departments of Natural History and of Minerals of Kazan State University was Karl FUKS (1804), who was the spiritual father of many Kazan naturalists. The Museum of Zoology became an independent institution in the time of E. F. EWERSMANN (1828-1860). In that period a great number of mounted bird and mammal specimens was bought in Germany. These acquisitions formed the basis of the

rich collection of vertebrates. Later on it was enlarged by expeditions of Kazan zoologists, such as E. A. EVERS-MANN, M. D. RUZSKIY, A. A. OSTROYUMOV, E. PELZMANN and others.

At the present time some 6,000 mounted specimens are on display in the exhibition of the Museum of Zoology which give us an idea about the great diversity of animals from unicellular protozoa to primates. The total number of specimens of vertebrates is about 3,000: 1,100 fishes, 45 amphibians, 170 reptilians, 160 mammals, and 1,000 stuffed birds and 500 spirit specimens of birds. The avian specimens represent 27 orders, 116 families and 390 genera.

According to the richness of forms in the Museum it ranks immediately after the museums of the Academy of Sciences in the capital. Among the outstanding exhibits, there are stuffed *Equus quagga* that are extinct now, *Sphenodon punctatum*, *Apteryx owenii*, *Ridgera piscesae* etc.

Dr. Tatjana Vodolajskaya, Department of Zoology, Kazan State University, Kremlevskaya 18, 420008 Kazan, Russia



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