

Field Museum of Natural History

FOUNDED BY MARSHALL FIELD, 1893

Roosevelt Road and Field Drive, Chicago

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FIELD MUSEUM NEWS

CLIFFORD C. GREGG, *Director of the Museum*.... Editor

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H. B. HARTE.....	Managing Editor

Members are requested to inform the Museum promptly of changes of address.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK—

Recreation Commission Endorses Museums Tax Restoration

At the regular April meeting of the Chicago Recreation Commission, that organization adopted a resolution endorsing the bill which will be presented before the special session of the Illinois legislature authorizing the Chicago Park District to levy a tax for the partial maintenance of museums located in the parks.

Full consideration was given to the demand that such legislation be contingent on the inauguration of evening hours for museums. The commission decided, however, that it could make no recommendation on evening hours without a thorough study of the additional costs involved. It was recognized that the museums of Chicago had been brought from their inceptions to their present high degree of efficiency and world-wide renown through the unselfish and intelligent direction of boards of trustees consisting of eminent and civic-minded business and professional men and women of Chicago. Failure to restore to the museums the support lost due to a decision of the Illinois Supreme Court last August would seriously impair the efficiency of these world famous institutions.

The resolution stated, in part: "It is in the best interest of the city of Chicago and its people that these institutions be maintained at their present high level of efficiency.

"Therefore, it is recommended by the Chicago Recreation Commission to the State Legislature that the proposed financial aid to the museums be granted without conditions other than those at present existing."

Needless to say, the administration of Field Museum concurs in the Commission's view, and appreciates the support being given to this institution and the other museums concerned.

—CLIFFORD C. GREGG, *Director*

New Exhibit of Ducks, Swans, and Geese

There was recently installed in Hall 21 a new exhibit of one of the most interesting and widespread groups of birds—the ducks, swans, and geese. Twenty-nine species are shown, representative of all parts of the world. They give an excellent idea of range of variation and types of adaptation in this family of birds. The installation and most of the preparation was done by Staff Taxidermist John W. Moyer.

All swans, geese, and ducks belong to one family of birds, but there are numerous subfamilies, ten in all, some of which are restricted to limited areas.

The largest birds of the family are the swans, of course. It is a curious fact that of the seven known species, the five that occur in the northern hemisphere are entirely white. The two from the southern hemisphere both have black in greater or lesser degree in their plumage. In the exhibit, the black swan of Australia is shown with two downy cygnets.

Perhaps the most beautiful of ducks is the Mandarin duck of Asia with its bizarre yet softly blended pattern of buff, green and dun, and exaggerated scapular feathers used in nuptial display. Yet others such as the rosy-billed duck of South America or the garganey teal of southern Europe are attractive in their own way.

There is no family of birds that shows such widespread distribution, nor is there any family in which specific characters are so constant. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that ducks are strong-winged and wide-ranging as individuals. As a result, any heritable mutations that may arise are quickly distributed throughout the whole population of the species. —R.B.

Staff Notes

Mr. Emmet R. Blake, Assistant Curator of Birds, recently made studies of the colonies of nesting egrets at Avery Island, Louisiana, where he was the guest of Mr. John A. Holabird, Mr. Holabird's son Christopher, and Mr. E. A. McIlhenny. Mr. Blake brought the Museum a representative collection of Gulf Coast vertebrates.

Mr. Karl P. Schmidt, Curator of Amphibians and Reptiles, made a visit of several weeks to Rochester, New York, to assemble data for preparation of a history of Ward's Natural Science Establishment, an organization which had an important influence on the development of science and scientific museums in this country.

In southern Georgia and northern Florida on a vacation, Dr. Henry Field, Curator of Physical Anthropology, spent much of his time in collecting specimens, of which he brought back several hundred, for the Museum's Departments of Botany, Geology, and Zoology.

Mr. Henry W. Nichols, Chief Curator of Geology, Mr. Elmer S. Riggs, Curator of Paleontology, Mr. Bryant Mather, Assistant Curator of Mineralogy, and Mr. Henry Herpers, Assistant Curator of Geology, attended the concurrent sessions of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Society of Exploration Geophysicists, and Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists held in Chicago, April 9-12. Mr. Mather has been appointed chairman of the Chicago committee to represent the Marquette Geologists' Association in the promotion of the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

Botanical Expedition's Progress

Dr. Julian A. Steyermark, Assistant Curator of the Herbarium, who has been conducting a botanical expedition in Guatemala for the Museum since last October, reports that his last month in the field will be spent in collecting in the jungle areas. These contain the country's richest flora. He has made large collections on the slopes of volcanoes, and anticipates that many of the plants will prove to be of new species. Dr. Steyermark will return shortly.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT FIELD MUSEUM

Field Museum is open every day of the year (except Christmas and New Year's Day) during the hours indicated below:

November, December,	
January, February . . .	9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
March, April, and	
September, October . . .	9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
May, June, July, August.	9 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Admission is free to Members on all days. Other adults are admitted free on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays; non-members pay 25 cents on other days. Children are admitted free on all days. Students and faculty members of educational institutions are admitted free any day upon presentation of credentials.

The Museum's Library is open for reference daily except Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Traveling exhibits are circulated in the schools of Chicago by the N. W. Harris Public School Extension Department of the Museum.

Lectures at schools, and special entertainments and tours for children at the Museum, are provided by the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures.

Free courses of lectures for adults are presented in the James Simpson Theatre on Saturday afternoons (at 2:30 o'clock) in March, April, October, and November.

A Cafeteria serves visitors. Rooms are available also for those bringing their lunches.

Chicago Motor Coach Company No. 26 buses provide direct transportation to the Museum. Service is offered also by Surface Lines, Rapid Transit Lines (the "L"), interurban electric lines, and Illinois Central trains. There is ample free parking space for automobiles at the Museum.



1940. "Botanical Expedition's Progress." *Field Museum news* 11(5), 6–6.

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