

EXCHANGE OF EXHIBITS.

The circulation of exchange displays between the eight principal museums of New Zealand has continued throughout the year, transit costs being borne by the Carnegie Corporation. Some highly educational exhibits have been the result; and the wide interest evidenced is adequate proof of their utility.

MAMMALS.

The stranding of a female and a calf of the toothed whale, *Mesoplodon bowdoini*, on the beach north of Levin provided the Museum with two complete skeletons of this species. The carcass was examined by the Director and two members of the staff, and the skeleton subsequently cut out and brought to the Museum for future treatment. This was the first occasion on which an actual specimen of this species in the flesh has been obtained, it having been previously known only from skeletons.

During the visit to the Museum of Mr. F. Tose, a peccary was secured and mounted under his direction, the modern methods of taxidermy as practised in America being used.

FISH COLLECTIONS.

During the year a number of small additions to the fish collection were made. Of these, the most important was a small example of *Pseudopentaceros*, of which very few examples have ever been taken in New Zealand. A large cast of a basking shark from Kapiti has now been placed on exhibition and is an outstanding feature of the collection of large representative fish from our seas.

BIRD COLLECTIONS.

The Museum is indebted to a wide circle of friends who have sent in bird specimens. Perhaps the most important was a specimen of the lesser frigate bird, *Fregata ariel*, the fourth record from New Zealand, picked up at Day's Bay by Mr. F. E. Reeves. Other important accessions include the following: The almost complete skeleton of a moa, *Megalapteryx hectori*, from Takaka; a collection of South American birds, presented by the Young Men's Christian Association; a pair of huia, presented by Mrs. J. M. Richardson; and a collection of Australian birds, presented by Mr. M. Smith.

By the generosity of the Otago University Museum, the only specimen of takahe, *Notornis mantelli*, existing in New Zealand has been received on loan for a short period.

ENTOMOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

During the past year progress has continued with the mounting and classifying of the collections of unset insects, and, with the exception of one collection, all the specimens of New Zealand insects are now mounted. Several large collections of foreign insects, however, have still to be dealt with.

Several important accessions have been made during the year, mainly by exchange with overseas institutions. Foremost among these is the Deutsches Entomologisches Institut of Berlin, from which we have received, through Dr. Walther Horn, 380 specimens of European beetles and a number of specimens of European Apterygota. An exchange with Mr. J. L. Froggatt, New Guinea, brought thirty-seven species of harmful insects inhabiting the territory of New Guinea. Two specimens of the magnificent Madagascan moth, *Argenia mitrei*, were received from M. Raymond Decary. Mr. G. V. Hudson, of Karori, presented ninety-six specimens of New Zealand Geometridae and four specimens of New Zealand beetles which have been determined at the British Museum. Mr. A. Clarke, of Rarotonga, presented two beautiful specimens of Rarotongan Phasmidae.

During the year a number of students, including overseas visitors to New Zealand, have studied the reference collections. Many inquiries have been answered and identifications made.

Two papers, entitled "Descriptions and Notes on New Zealand Collembola" and "A New Fly, Diptera Anthomyiidae, from New Zealand," were published by the Museum Entomologist in the "Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand," Vol. 67, December, 1937.

Following on the visit of Mr. Tose, new methods now are being employed to prevent fading in the preparation of insects for display, and as a result it has been possible to remove several of the dark covers from the insect-cases. The increased interest in these cases shown by the public proves that this change has been very successful, and it is hoped in due course to be able to remove the dark covers from all display cases. An extensive exhibit depicting the story of silk, from the silk-worm egg to the finished silk articles, was placed on view during the year.

BOTANICAL DEPARTMENT.

To stimulate interest in our native plants, an exhibition of live plant specimens was held in the Museum in December, 1937. Owing to the excellent response received throughout New Zealand we were enabled to exhibit six hundred species. This exhibition proved so successful that it has been decided to hold a similar exhibition annually. In this regard we wish to express our indebtedness to the Native Plant Preservation Society, the Wellington Beautifying Society, the Plant Research Station, the State Forest Service, the Arthur Pass National Park, and the Botanical Gardens in the main centres of New Zealand.

A changing series of live botanical specimens and growing plants, many of which have been propagated at the Museum, is always on view. Many specimens have been collected and many presented for this purpose. Exhibits of this nature have proved of great interest to school-children and the general public.

Under the Carnegie exchange scheme, a case illustrative of the kauri-tree and its products was set up as an exhibit for circulation among the New Zealand museums.