

AN APPEAL

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) is a premier taxonomic research organization, under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Govt. of India, engaged in zoological research and documentation of the faunal resources of the country. It was established on 1st July 1916 to promote the survey, exploration and research on the fauna of the Indian Region.

Zoological Survey of India at the time of its inception had inherited enormous collection of zoological specimens/ exhibits from the erstwhile Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Since then the Survey has been acting as the custodian of this heritage collection, caring and maintaining them. The collection, comprising the zoological specimens of all groups of animals from microscopic protozoa to huge elephants and whales, is a priceless wealth of the country and is called the “National Zoological Collection” (NZC).

Zoological Survey of India has been making all efforts to enrich its zoological collections by accepting the ‘types’ and other identified faunal materials from animal taxonomists and biodiversity researchers of various zoological institutions and universities in the country and abroad. Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, including its Regional Centres, has been designated by MoEF&CC to act as the ‘National Repository’ for all faunal groups from India, under the Act, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, read with sections 6 and 12 of Notification S.O. 1911 (E), dated 8th November, 2006.

The zoological collection under the custody of ZSI has grown over the years to become the best and the largest one in South-East-Asia, with the well-represented collections of the fauna of India and adjacent countries, even that of the distant Kampuchea in Southeastern Asia. ZSI has at present in its NZC holding nearly 4.5 million specimens of about 70,000 species, out of the approximately 96,373 species (nearly 8 per cent of the world fauna) so far realized from the Indian Region. Among this collection includes about 18,000 ‘type’ specimens, such as holotypes, paratypes, syntypes, etc., which are unique and of highest scientific importance. They are the original specimens, serving as the voucher specimens, on which new species descriptions have been based. The ‘type specimens’ typify and fix the species/genus name for all time, and remain available for examination, comparison and correction in future studies.

Type specimens and identified reference collections are invaluable to researchers for any taxonomic work as they form the basis for accurate and reliable identification; they are also the fundamental units of bio-resource for new analytical techniques related to higher-level research on taxonomy and systematics (e.g. molecular taxonomy). They represent the irreplaceable national/international asset in perspectives of zoological research and biodiversity informatics.

ZSI intends to augment its zoological collection to make it a more complete one, enriching it with species not represented in the collection. Zoological Survey of India is therefore soliciting the

cooperation of the animal taxonomists, biodiversity researchers, scientists and naturalists, appealing to them to deposit their ‘type’ materials—holotype or paratype(s)—and other identified specimens to the ‘National Repository’ of Zoological Survey of India. The researchers may deposit their ‘material’ to ZSI in the following address:

Officer-in-Charge, Identification and Advisory Section,
Zoological Survey of India, M-Block, New Alipore,
Kolkata – 700 053.

The ‘type’ and other identified specimens will be duly registered, and the data will be computerized. The researchers may use the Registration number of their deposited ‘type’(s) in their publications of the new taxon/ taxa.

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