



## Editorial

### The Colombian Bird Collection Network, an initiative for cooperation

In September 2002, as an initiative of Project BioMap, the Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, National University of Colombia (ICN) and Conservation International, the first meeting of Colombian bird collections was held in Bogotá, with eleven national collections represented at the meeting. In May 2003, the second meeting was held in Bogotá, with 32 people of 17 Colombian collections, plus one Venezuelan collection. At these meetings, people from collections all over the country were able to gather and meet each other and talk about their collections.

Based on an analysis of the status of each collection and the collections as a whole, it became evident that Colombian collections are largely working with scant resources and personnel. During the meeting it became evident there was a need to work together to jointly overcome resource problems. Thereafter an agreement was established to start a national support network whose main purpose would be to cooperate and strengthen the individual collections as well as the network. The first task was the establishment of the discussion list ([RCCA@gruposyahoo.com](mailto:RCCA@gruposyahoo.com)).

RCCA activities include trying to generate resources for the collections and trying to regain historical collections that have disappeared or "lost" from public knowledge and incorporate them into institutions that can take care of them or involve them in RCCA; making contacts and strengthening relationships and establish cooperation links with collections abroad; promoting and strengthening data sharing with SINA (National Environmental System); become an advisory tool for decision makers in the government; organize courses and workshops on bird collection curation and collection management; and write and publish a Bird Collections Manual, with management protocols, curatory, sharing and lending agreements and related topics.

Each collection has to make clear their objectives and priorities. Each collection will develop a Collection Health Index, as the first step towards adequate and efficient management. Collections should define priority areas for collecting and make an annual field work plan to

promote field research. These two activities will ensure the growth of the collections with new material.

To educate people on the importance of collections and collecting, each participant will act as an "ambassador" of the RCCA, giving lectures on the importance of natural collections. It became evident that many institutions owning bird collections do not recognize the treasure they have and that in combination they are a valuable resource at a national and international level. A document highlighting the importance of this resource will be sent by the RCCA to all institutions bearing collections and others interested in the topic.

The following collections are members of the RCCA: San José College (Medellín), Cristo College (Manizales), La Salle (Bogotá), Alexander von Humboldt Institute, ICN, Valle del Cauca Scientific Research Institute (INCIVA, Cali), and the Universities of Los Andes, Antioquia, Atlántico, Caldas, Cauca, Distrital, Industrial de Santander, Javeriana, Nariño, Pamplona, Tolima and Valle, as well as La Salle in Caracas, Venezuela.

All the collections are involved in Project BioMap and will be visited by the Colombian cataloguers during the next semester. BioMap in Colombia has already finished databasing 33,000 specimens at ICN and presently working with the La Salle collection in Bogotá and will follow with the other collections in the country. About 65,000 specimens will be systematized from Colombian museums in total. This will be an important and highly valuable contribution to the database of Colombian specimens, of great value for researchers, managers and decision makers in the country.

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## NewsByte summary

- January 2003** - Visiting and databasing the Florida Natural History Museum collection in Gainesville, Florida.
- Jan-Feb.** - Visiting and databasing the collection at the Louisiana State University, Museum of Natural Sciences, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Jan-Feb.** - Visiting and databasing the Delaware Museum of Natural History collection, Wilmington – Delaware American Museum of Natural History
- Jan-Apr.** - Visiting and databasing the collections at Brussels, Madrid, Oxford University, Frankfurt and Liverpool Museums.
- February 9.** Visit to the collection at the INCIVA (Valle del Cauca Scientific Research Institute) in Cali, Colombia
- Feb-Mar.** - Visit to and cataloguing of the collection at the Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven – Connecticut
- March** - Data on the four Colombian specimens held at the La Salle Natural History Museum in Caracas were sent to BioMap. Thanks to Marcos Salcedo, curator of the collection, who kindly sent the data.
- March** - Visit to and databasing of the collection at the MCZ- Harvard University, Boston –Massachusetts
- April** - Visit to and databasing of the collection at the Atlantico University, Barranquilla, Colombia.
- April** - Visit to and databasing of the Marine Research Institute (Invemar) collection, Santa Marta, Colombia
- April** - Visit to the collection at La Salle School (Biffi), Barranquilla, Colombia.
- April** - Databasing at the ICN collection in Bogota, Colombia is finished
- April** - The new BioMap web page ([www.biomap.net](http://www.biomap.net)) is released
- May** - Workshop on bird collection curation and management at ICN. Thirty-five people of 18 Colombian and 1 Venezuelan collections participated.
- May** - The second meeting of the Colombian Bird Collections Network (RCCA) was held in Bogota
- June** - Databasing at la Salle collection in Bogota started.



## General NewsBytes

### News from Europe

Between January and the beginning of April, Nigel Cleere databased the Colombian specimens held at the museums in Brussels (730 specimens), Madrid (1,000 specimens), Oxford (University Museum) (230 specimens), Frankfurt (2500 specimens) and Liverpool (300 specimens). A total of 27 European collections are participating in Project BioMap, with the majority ground-truthed. Recent highlights include a number of Colombian endemics held in all museums, the number of types held in most of the museums and a specimen of the hummingbird Blue-mantled Thornbill *Chacostigma stanleyi stanleyi*, which is the first record for Colombia. This specimen was received by Frankfurt Museum in 1893 from the collector Lehman, who appears to have been a Consul in Popayán. Other highlights were the Wyatt collection housed in the Oxford University Museum. This small collection is one of historical importance with regards to Colombian ornithology.

Liverpool Museum, U.K., has a number of important types from Colombia (many described by Fraser), including: *Ramphastos citreolaemus* (1 syntype), *Picus rivolii* (2 syntypes of *P. elegans*); *Pionus chalcopterus* (holotype); *Myioborus o. ornatus* (holotype of *Setophaga leucomphomma*); *Myioborus melanocephalus ruficoronatus* (holotype); *Adelomyia m. melanogenys* (holotype); *Coeligena bonapartei* (2 syntypes of *Trochilus aurogaster*); *Heliangelus exortis* (holotype); *Eriocnemis v. vestitus* (2 syntypes of *Trochilus uropygialis*); *Eriocnemis cupreiventris* (holotype); *Eriocnemis isaacsonii* (holotype = hybrid); *Oxygogon g. guerinii* (holotype of *Trochilus parvirostris*); *Dendrocolaptes picumnus multistrigatus* (holotype); *Turdus fuscater gigas* (holotype); *Microbatas c. cinereiventris* (holotype); and *Diglossa l. lafresnayi* (holotype of *Agrilorhinus bonapartei*).

The Naturhistorisches Museum Vienna, Austria, contains over 2000 Colombian hummingbird specimens, plus Colombian endemics including: *Saucerottia cyanifrons* (45); *Anthocephala floriceps berlepschi* (1); *Coeligena prunellei* (21); *Ortalis columbiana* (holotype and paratype); *Pyrrhura calliptera* (1); *Ramphocelus flammigerus* (2); *Euphonia concinna* (3) and *Dacnis egregia* (1).

Further good news is that the European Union has granted funding to Nigel to visit the Stockholm museum "Naturhistoriska Riksmuseum" and Paris Museum to database Colombian specimens. Over the coming 6 months, Nigel will be hoping to visit the following key collections for Colombian specimens:

**Southern Europe/northern Italy:** Geneva, Switzerland, Neuchatel, Bern, Turin (SG), Italy, Turin, Genova, Italy, Firenze, Italy, Milan. **UK:** Exeter, Cardiff, Cambridge. **France/ northern Germany:** Paris, Hamburg, Germany, Bremen, Germany, Braunschweig – Hanover, Munich, Vienna, Austria, Praha, Czech Rep., and Dresden. **Russia and eastern Europe:** Moscow (ZMMU), Sankt, Petersburg, Stavanger, Norway, and Helsinki, Finland, Warsaw, Poland, and Stockholm, Sweden.

## News from Colombia

Andrea Morales and Diana Arzuza, the Colombian cataloguers have finished databasing around 33.000 specimens of the ICN collection in Bogota. In this collection there are about 1500 Colombian species and 2300 subspecies of the 2800 total Colombian taxa. The Eastern Range of the Andes is the best represented region in this collection. The Magdalena Valley (middle); Eastern Plains, Meta, the Serranía de la Macarena and some from Arauca are also well represented, followed by the Chocó – Guapi region and the Amazon; the Cauca, north of Antioquia, Vaupes and Guainia, Nariño and the north of Atlantico. The areas with fewer specimens at ICN are the north coast, the Central Cordillera and the Valle del Cauca.

Digital pictures of all subspecies of several families were taken at this collection.

In April, Diana Arzuza visited the bird collections at the Atlantico University and finished digitizing the 150 specimens and the Marine Research Institute (INVEMAR) collection in Santa Marta with 48 specimens. The INVEMAR collection includes the specimens donated to them by the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University. Diana also visited the Biffi School who also has a bird collection but did not digitize the specimens.

At the beginning of June, the digitalization of la Salle (Bogotá) started. This collection has around 9000 specimens. After La Salle, we will start the other collections in the country. The following collections will be part of the database: Universities of los Andes, Distrital, Antioquia, Caldas, Valle, Cauca, Industrial de Santander and Pamplona, Colegio San José (Medellín), Colegio de Cristo - Ecoparque Yarumos (Manizales) and Valle del Cauca Scientific Research Institute (INCIVA).

Diana Arzuza, Andrea Morales and Sussy De La Zerda want to give special thanks to Gary Stiles, Gonzalo Andrade and all the researchers and collaborators at the ICN for all the support during the last year while working there.

We thank Luz Myriam Moreno from the Atlantico University and Milena Benavides from INVEMAR for their support and Professor Montealegre at the Biffi School for his interest.

## News from North America

At the beginning of the year, the Darwin fellows, Clara Isabel Bohórquez and Juan Carlos Verhelst were working for their Masters' degrees at King's College, London. They were also revising American Museum of Natural History data.

In April, Clara Isabel and Juan Carlos got the Jessup grant given by the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, to assist them during their May-June visit to their collection.



Clara Isabel, Juan Carlos and the BioMap team would like to thank the curators, managers and personnel at the collections for the support during their visits: at Florida Museum of Natural History, curator David Steadman and collection managers Andrew Kratter and Thomas Weber; curator James Van Remsen and collection manager Steve Cardiff at Louisiana State University, Museum of Natural Sciences; Gene Hess and Jean Woods at Delaware Museum of Natural History; at the Peabody Museum, collection manager Kristof Zirkowsky; Douglas Causey, Jeremiah Trimble and Alison Pirie at the Museum of Comparative Zoology; collection manager David Willard and the curator John Bates at the Field Museum; and curator Leo Joseph and collection manager Nate Rice at the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences.

We also would like to thank other people for their help and support: Kazuya Naoki in Baton Rouge and Sally Shelton in Wilmington – Washington D.C; without them the work at the collections would not have been possible.

On Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Juan Carlos and Clara Isabel visited the Smithsonian Institution Ornithology Department, to talk about BioMap. Leonard Hirsch, Gary Graves, Anna Weitzman, Sally Shelton from the Smithsonian, Alvaro Espinel from BioMap and Conservation International and Gene Hess from the Delaware Museum attended the meeting. The meeting was interesting and they got to some positive agreements about BioMap for visiting in the collection in 2003.

## Other news

- Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, Sussy De La Zerda visited the "Federico C. Lehmann" collection at the Natural Sciences Museum in Valle del Cauca Scientific Research Institute (INCIVA); this is a very interesting collection with about 7.000 specimens. All the specimens are catalogued and systematized. She also visited the new building where they will be moving soon.
- Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, Roque Casallas with two students from the La Salle collection in Bogotá, visited us in the ICN. We had the opportunity to talk about BioMap and show them the database
- The final version of the Manual for digitizing bird collections –for Project BioMap was finished and translated to English. The objective of this manual is to



standardize the data entry of all cataloguers in different parts of the world.

- The Memorandum of Agreement for the Colombian collections was finished and has been evaluated and approved by many of the collections participating in BioMap.
- The ICN, Project BioMap, the Alexander von Humboldt Institute and Conservation International are scanning some classic books for collections, such as: 16 volumes of "*Check-list of Birds of the World*" by J.L. Peters, 13 volumes of "*Catalogue of birds of the Americas and the adjacent islands*" by Hellmayr and 10 volumes of "*The birds of North and Middle America*" by Ridgway. The scanned books will be distributed as CDs to all the Colombian collections, to be used by curators and researchers.



- Between 21-24<sup>th</sup> of May, the bird collections curation workshop was held at ICN in Bogotá. BioMap, the ICN and CI organized the meeting. About 40 people of 18 Colombian collections and Marcos Salcedo from La Salle Museum in Caracas attended the workshop. Two people from the National University in Arauca were supposed to come too, but unfortunately they could not get out of Villavicencio due to a transportation strike. Yaneth Muñoz-Saba and Enrique Forero from ICN collaborated with very interesting talks. Thank you very much Yaneth and Enrique.
- Topics like biodiversity conservation, importance of birds and collection in conservation, history of Colombian Ornithology, taxonomy, collections care and management were covered during the workshop. We had also two sessions on preparation and restoration of skins and how a collection should operate, with the example of the ICN. We had a short field trip to a forest near Bogotá.



We heard an interesting talk about the La Salle collection in Caracas, given by Marcos Salcedo, curator of the collection. Enrique Forero from ICN presented a lecture on the Colombian Herbarium Association, the Latin American Botanical Association and Latin American Botanical Network. This lecture gave us useful insights for the Colombian Network of Bird Collections.

The workshop and meeting of the RCCA memoirs will be ready by the end of June. If interested please send an email to [coordinadora@biomap.net](mailto:coordinadora@biomap.net)

## Darwin Database ~ data update

Colombian specimens held within Europe within the Darwin Database

Collection	Total specimens	# Colombian
Zoologisch Museum, Amsterdam, Holland	50,000	350
Naturkunde-Museum Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany	1,550	17
Museu de Zoologia, Barcelona, Spain	7,000	3
Zoologisk Museum, Bergen, Norway	6,194	4
Museum fur Naturkunde, Berlin, Germany	135,000	800
The Natural History Museum (BMNH), Tring, UK	1,000,000	6,900
Bolton Museums, Art Gallery & Aquarium, Bolton, UK	5,000	1
Booth Museum, Brighton, UK	10,000	51
Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium	71,295	740
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, UK	20,000	71
Zoologisk Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark	120,000?	104
Royal Albert Memorial & Art Gallery, Exeter, UK	8,500	94
Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Frankfurt, Germany	100,000	2500
Musee Zoologie, Lausanne, Switzerland	7,000	6
Leeds Museum Resource Centre, Leeds, UK	4,500	9
Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, Holland	126,000	2000
Biologie Zentrum des Oberosterreichisches Landesmuseums, Linz, Austria	8,200	5
National Museums & Galleries on Mersyside, Liverpool, UK	48,000	307
Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid, Spain	18,600	1000
The Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK	16,500	60
Malmo Museer, Malmo, Sweden	4000	6
Darwin Museum, Moscow, Russia	11,000	70
Zoologisk Museum, Oslo, Norway	25,000	59
Oxford University Museum, Oxford, UK	19,000	229
Staatliches Museum fur Naturkunde, Stuttgart, Germany	70,000	760
Museums d'Histoire Naturelle de Toulouse, Toulouse, France	8,900	21
Naturhistorisches Museum, Wien, Austria	100,000	2000

BioMap has visited and gathered data on Colombian specimens at the following North American museums:

North American collections catalogued	Specimens
Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia <i>IN PROCESS</i>	19000
American Museum of Natural History, New York	26252
Delaware Museum of Natural History, Wilmington – Delaware	1357
Field Museum of Natural History	13600
Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida	322
MCZ- Harvard University, Boston –Massachusetts	5000
Louisiana State University, Museum of Natural Sciences, Baton Rouge, Louisiana	1811
Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven – Connecticut	1793





## Colombian Bird Collection Network

During May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, the second meeting of the Colombian Network of Bird Collections (RCCA) was held in Bogotá, with 32 people participating. The commitments acquired during the first meeting were discussed and new commitments were made: collections will clearly define their objectives and priorities. They will have to define the tasks of the curator, manager or person in charge of the collection in order to try to make their work more effective, and when needed try to have more permanent personnel or try to get help with volunteers, assistants and/or students. Each collection will work on developing the Collection Health Index and verify the status of every specimen. Every one should develop a list of the collection priority areas in the region and make an annual program for collecting in those areas. Collections should try to find "lost collections" in their region and when possible relocate them in their own collections or invite them to participate in the RCCA.



Educating people in the institutions that house the collections, as well as the general public, on the importance of natural history collections in conservation will be a priority for the RCCA. A document highlighting the importance of collections will be distributed to every institution that has a bird collection and other institutions related to collections (e.g. Ministry of the Environment and the regional institutions in charge of the natural resources management). At the meeting all participants worked on the document and it will be ready to be distributed in the coming weeks.

## BioMap Diary

In the next months, Juan Carlos Verhelst and Clara Isabel Bohórquez will be gathering information on Colombian specimens from the Field Museum, Chicago (about 14.000) and the Academy of Sciences in Philadelphia (about 20.000).

In Europe, Nigel Cleere will continue digitizing the Colombian specimen's information in Southern Europe, the United Kingdom, France/north of Germany, Russia and Eastern Europe.

In Colombia the collections to be visited the next few months will be la Salle, los Andes and Distrital Universities in Bogotá, and out of Bogotá: Antioquia, Caldas, Cauca, Industrial de Santander, del Valle Universities, INCIVA (Cali), and the San José College (Medellín) and Cristo College (Manizales).

During August 2003 we will participate with Fundación ProAves teaching the course "Conservation and Study of Birds: Monitoring Techniques for Terrestrial Birds" that will be held in Jardín, Antioquia.

## BioMap Directive Committee

**Robert Prŕs-Jones** (chair) – The Natural History Museum  
**Gonzalo Andrade** and **F. Gary Stiles** – Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia  
**Jose Vicente Rodriguez** – Conservation International, Colombia  
**Alvaro Espinel** – Conservation International, Center for Applied Biodiversity Science, USA

