

MUSE U.M. NEWS

JANUARY 1996

No. 4

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM

RECENT ACCESSIONS BY THE MUSEUM

Rachel Wolstenholme recovered the partial carcass of a **Mountain Lion** (*Felis concolor*). The remains were examined by wolf researchers and it is believed that the lion was killed and consumed by wolves. This specimen, exhibiting tooth marks associated with a wolf kill, will be an interesting addition to the skeletal collection.

A **Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*) was found as a road-kill in Lewis Clark County by Terry McEneaney. This is the first museum specimen of the Pacific Loon from Montana. Its importance was recognized by Terry and Phil Wright, and was transformed from a mangled road-kill to a museum specimen thanks to talents of Heather Pier, Museum Preparator.

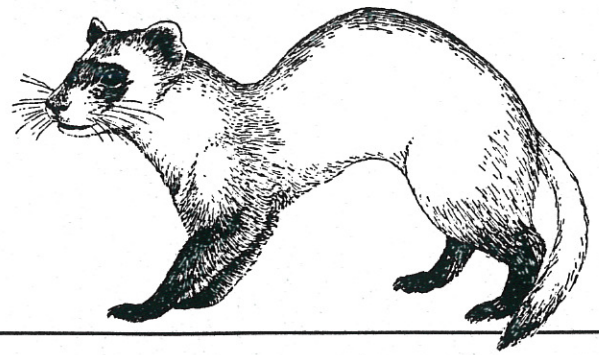
Bart O'Gara donated the horns of a **Black Rhinoceros** (*Diceros bicornis*) collected in Tanzania in 1952. The Black Rhinoceros is now listed as an endangered species and this donation will add to the Museum's important function of preserving specimens of rare species.

Phil Wright and Denver Holt collected a **Glaucous-winged Gull** (*Larus glaucescens*) from Lake County, Montana. Though there are sight records, this is the first museum specimen of this species from Montana.

Paul Hendricks of the Montana Natural Heritage Program donated seven fully prepared small mammal specimens from Montana. These include *Myotis californicus*, *M. evotis*, *M. yumanensis*, and *Sorex merriami*.

A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** (*Aegolius acadicus*) from Powell County, apparently caught by a cat, was recovered by Elaine Caton.

Ted Nordhagen recovered the following birds from eastern Montana: **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** (*Empidonax flaviventris*), this is the first record for the state; **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (*Ammodramus caudactus*), only the second record from Montana; **Mourning Warbler** (*Oporornis philadelphia*) and a **Le Conte's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*).



MUSEUM OUTREACH

Aldo Leopold once suggested that perhaps education is a process of trading awareness for things of lesser worth. In the race to cram knowledge, pass classes, handle stress and earn a degree, biology students can get easily separated from the fascination of science and the joy of learning. As a volunteer at Lewis and Clark Elementary School, I have been reminded almost weekly how much fun science can be.

Carol Reeves' Special Education class is comprised of students with behavioral and emotional problems and range in grade levels 1 through 5. With support from The University of Montana's Zoological Museum, I borrowed skulls and study skins for the class's weekly Show-n-Tell. The informal presentations and hands-on opportunities brought overwhelmingly positive responses from the students. Their questions, interest, and enthusiasm reminded me how fascinating science really is.

Even for students not always excited about learning, wildlife and nature are irresistible draws. Natural curiosity is, perhaps, the best teacher, and the excitement of discovery the best reward. With help from the Zoological Museum, the students at Lewis and Clark not only learned some science, but hopefully gained some incentive to pursue their education. For myself, I learned that true education does not suppress awareness, but encourages it.

Karen Alford
Guest Columnist

MUSEUM IS RE-ACCREDITED

The Systematic Collections Committee of the American Society of Mammalogists has re-accredited the Museum's mammal collection. First conferred in 1975, accreditation by the Society verifies that the Museum's collection meets or exceeds all of the basic curatorial standards established by the Society. While we are honored to receive this certificate, we also realize that our goal is not to merely meet minimum standards but to provide the best possible care for the collections. Today's collection-based research is due to the careful preservation and storage of specimens by our predecessors. We strive to meet the needs of current and future researchers by insuring professional standards for the collections.