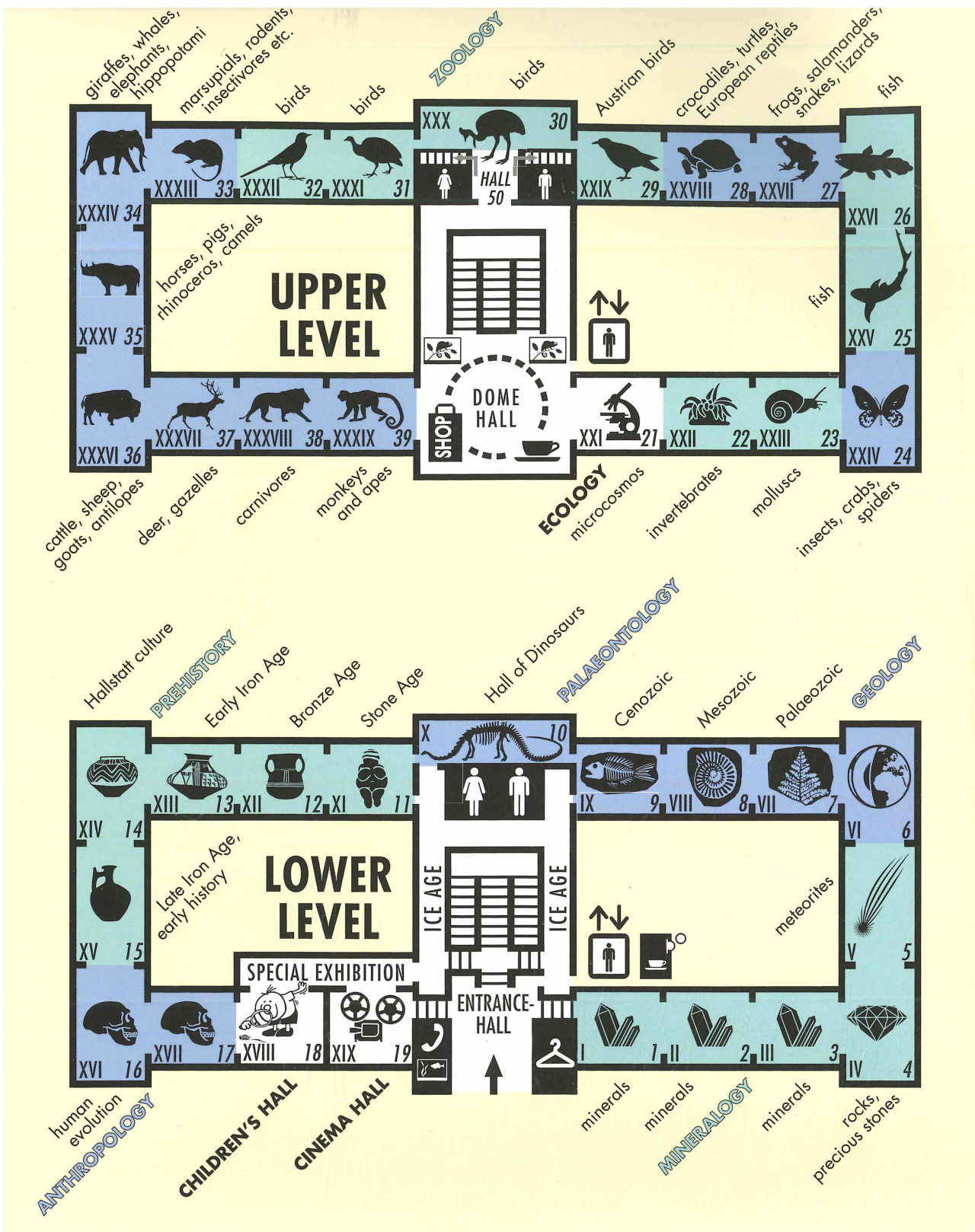


THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM VIENNA





PLAN OF THE MUSEUM

Impressum

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The Natural History Museum is like a palace for natural science. It was constructed from 1871 to 1889 by the architects Gottfried Semper and Carl Hasenauer in the neo-renaissance style.

The Natural History Museum Vienna is among the most important museums of Europe and among the most esteemed scientific institutions in the world. The origin of the collections goes back to Emperor Franz Stephan I., Maria Theresia's husband. In 1748 he bought the by then largest collection of natural objects in the world from the Italian naturalist Johann Knight of Baillou and thus laid the foundations for the present Natural History Museum. In due course of history the collections expanded through expeditions, collecting parties and the scientific work of the researchers.

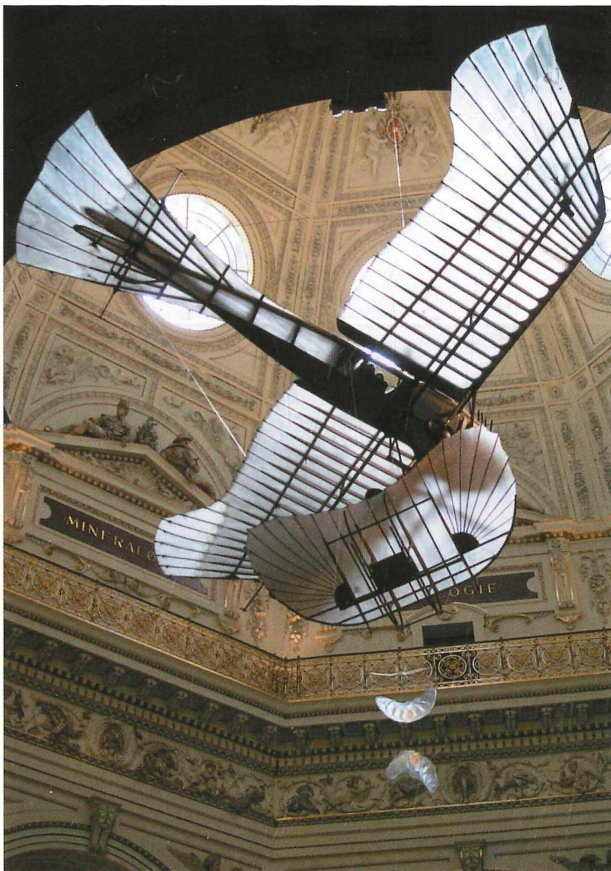
The present building at the Ringstraße was erected by Gottfried Semper and Carl Hasenauer. Today this unique historical building houses more than 20 millions of collection items, among them large zoological collections with specimens of endangered and even extinct animals. Enormous skeletons of dinosaurs and precious fossils testify evolution. The prehistorical collection gives an overview of the cultural development of early Europe. The Venus from Willendorf, a statue of 25.000 years, is among the most famous prehistorical findings in the world. Beyond that the Natural History Museum has one of the most important mineralogical, anthropological and botanical collections world-wide.



*The Natural History Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts are facing each other. These twin buildings make part of the unfinished **Imperial Forum**, which was planned to connect the two museums with the Hofburg.*



View from the entrance hall through the hole in the dome.



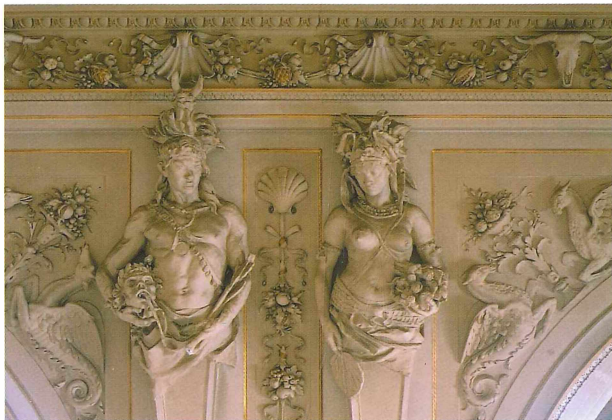
*Model (1:7) of **Etrich's Taube** (Etrich's monoplane), the **Zanonian glider** and **gliding Zanonian seeds** from Java in the museum's upper dome hall. Etrich's Taube from 1910 is a good example how technology can learn from nature. Igo Etrich observed the stable gliding character of the winged seeds of Zanonian (presently Alsomitra) macrocarpa, a liana from Java. Using this as a model he first constructed gliders and later on his famous aeroplane.*

***Staircase of the Natural History Museum:** architecture, paintings and sculptures harmonize with the collections within the building and form an integrated piece of historical artwork.*

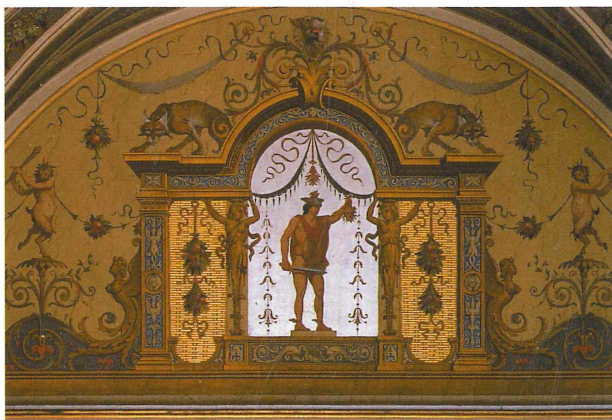




Café Nautilus and the **museum's shop** in the middle of the upper dome hall invite you to enjoy a break. The ornamental floor is made of black limestone from Belgium and white marble from Carrara/Italy.

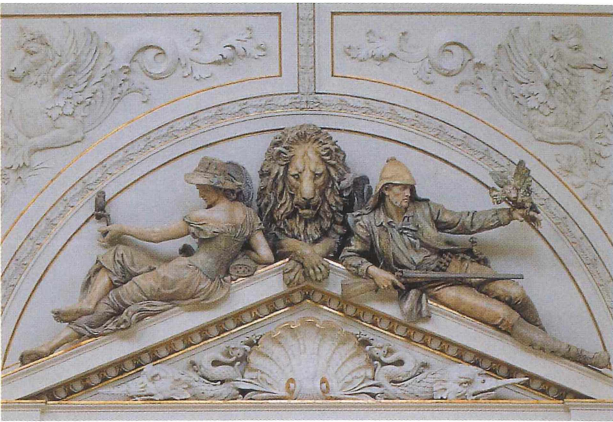
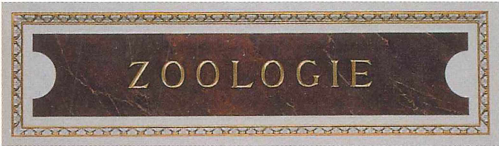


Caryatids representing peoples from different continents decorate the halls of the former ethnological collections. These stayed in the Natural History Museum until 1928. Today they form a museum of its own ("Völkerkundemuseum"), situated in the Neue Hofburg.

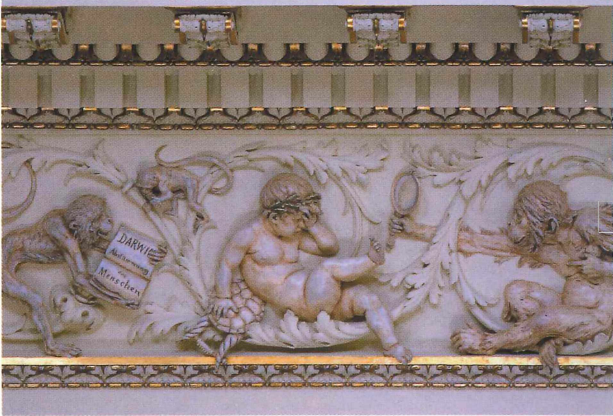


The whole first floor of the Natural History Museum is richly **decorated with paintings** thematically connected with the collection items. Their style is inspired by grotesque paintings of the renaissance and full of interesting little details, like this one from the carnivore hall (no. 38).

Allegory of Zoology in the upper dome.
Eight panels done by sculptor Viktor Tilgner decorate the interior of the upper dome. Each two of these stucco statutes represent the scientific disciplines of the museum at the time it was opened.



Detail from the stucco decoration in the frieze of the upper dome by Johannes Benk. It is an allusion to **Charles Darwin's theory on the origin of mankind**. The child turns away from the mirror held by the Chimpanzee and does not want to realise their common ancestors. The spider monkey behind the child shows Darwin's book "The descent of Man".



View into the octagonal dome with its magnificent stucco decoration.





The „Kaiserbild“, painted by Franz Messmer and Jakob Kohl in 1773, depicts the founder of the collections of the Natural History Museum, Emperor Franz I. Stephan (1708–1765) among his scholars (from left to right: Gerard van Swieten, Johann Knight of Baillou, Valentin Duval, Abbé Johann Marcy). The collections, originally housed in the Hofburg, were cared for and enlarged by these men.



Ammonite, emerald and rock crystal: many collection items which can be seen on the table in the centre of the Kaiserbild derive from the collection of Franz Stephan and are still exhibited at the Natural History Museum.

Maria Theresa's lap dog: taxidermy specimen of a *Phalène* (French: moth). These little dogs were very popular during the 18th century due to their kindhearted character and can be seen on many family portraits of the imperial family. This very lifelike preparate of a dog from Maria Theresa's time is a masterpiece of early taxidermy skills.



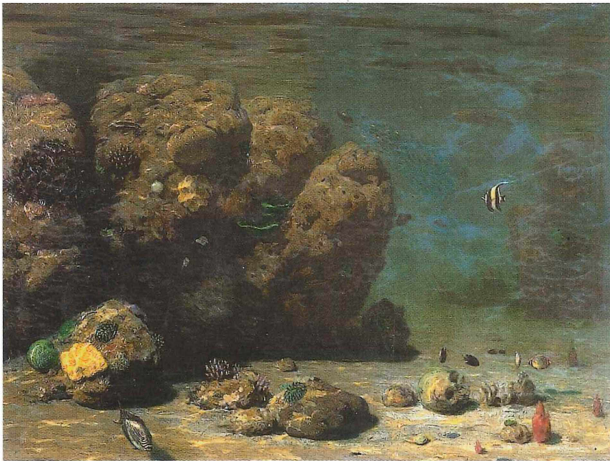
On the occasion of the marriage of the Austrian Archduchess Leopoldina with the Portuguese successor of the throne, Dom Pedro, an **expedition was sent to Brazil in 1817**. On board of the expedition vessel was Johann Natterer, a zoologist and preparator. Even after all the other scientists had returned to Vienna, Natterer stayed in Brazil. For eighteen years he travelled through the unexplored tropics of South America. He took countless numbers of specimens with him to Vienna, like these **caymans from the Amazon**.



Mundrucu indians at Rio Tapajoz in Brazil, painting by Julius von Blaas. Again and again scientific expeditions led researchers from the museum to the Amazon where lots of previously unknown species of animals and plants were collected.

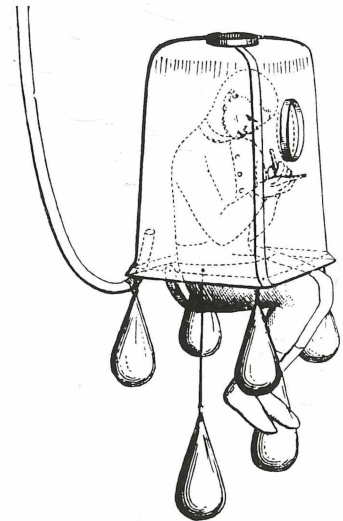


Tegetthoff vessel enclosed in the ice, painting by Julius von Payer. On August 30, 1873, Franz Josef Land was discovered by an Austrian-Hungarian north polar expedition under the command of Julius von Payer and Carl Weyprecht. Since the Tegetthoff was threatened to break under the pressure of the ice, the members of the expedition had to beat a long retreat to the south by sledge and boat. This painting, showing the lonely wreck and the atmosphere of the starting polar day is a symbol of human helplessness towards the forces of nature.



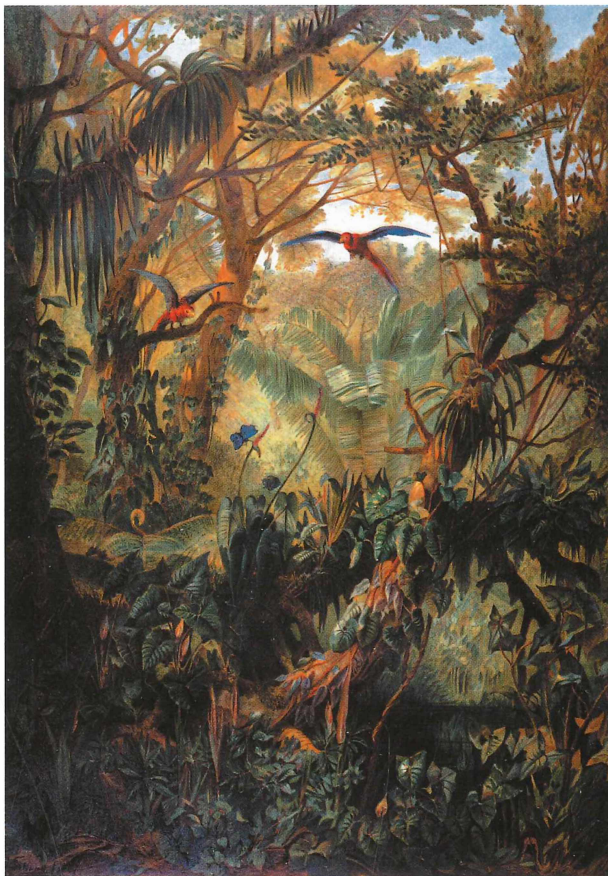
First authentic underwater painting of the world

During the 1860ies the Viennese diplomat and explorer Eugen Baronet von Ransonnnet travelled to Sri Lanka. Inside a self-designed diving bell he started to draw underwater sketches along the coastline. Based on these drawings Ransonnnet did this excellent oil painting of the underwater life, which he later donated to the museum.



The probably most ambitious Austrian expedition of the 19th century was the **circumnavigation of the world by the frigate Novara** (1857–59). The enormous amounts of objects that were collected during this tour by the researchers are used for scientific studies at the Natural History Museum until today.

For health reasons **Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian** could not participate in the Novara expedition, which he initiated. So he started for Brazil in 1859, mainly to do botanical studies there. The scientific results were intended to be published in lushly illustrated books. The famous landscape painter Josef Selleny painted this frontispiece for an unfinished publication on the arum lily family.



These **Giant Crabs** (*Macrocheira kaempferi*) were a state present to Emperor Franz Josef I. by the Japanese Emperor. The claws of the male spanning more than three metres make this species the largest living crustacean. It lives mainly in the deep sea, but can also reach depths closer to the surface. Each of the claws of the larger of the two specimens, a male from the Bay of Tokyo, are more than 1,5 metres long.





The **Viennese meteorite collection** goes back to emperor Franz Stephan, too, and thus making it the oldest collection of its kind in the world. Meteorites are cosmic bodies, entering the atmosphere, not dying away completely and therefore hitting the ground. The word meteorite derives from the Greek language, meaning "being in the air". Meteorites can roughly be classified into three groups: irons, stones and stony-irons. Almost 1.000 different meteorites are exposed in hall no. 5.



Smoky quartz with 115 kg
from Tiefen-glacier in Switzerland



Mineralogical collection: The Natural History Museum has one of the five largest mineralogical collections in the world. Out of about 100.000 minerals, gem stones and rocks approximately 20.000 items are presented in the five show halls. The rich stocks derive mainly from the former Austrian-Hungarian empire and the Alpine areas.

This **rock crystal** from Ahrn valley, South Tyrol is one of the oldest collection items out of the mineralogical collection. It derives from the famous "Kunst- und Wunderkammer" (cabinet of arts and miracles) from Archduke Ferdinand from Tyrol from the 16th century (Collection from Ambras castle).



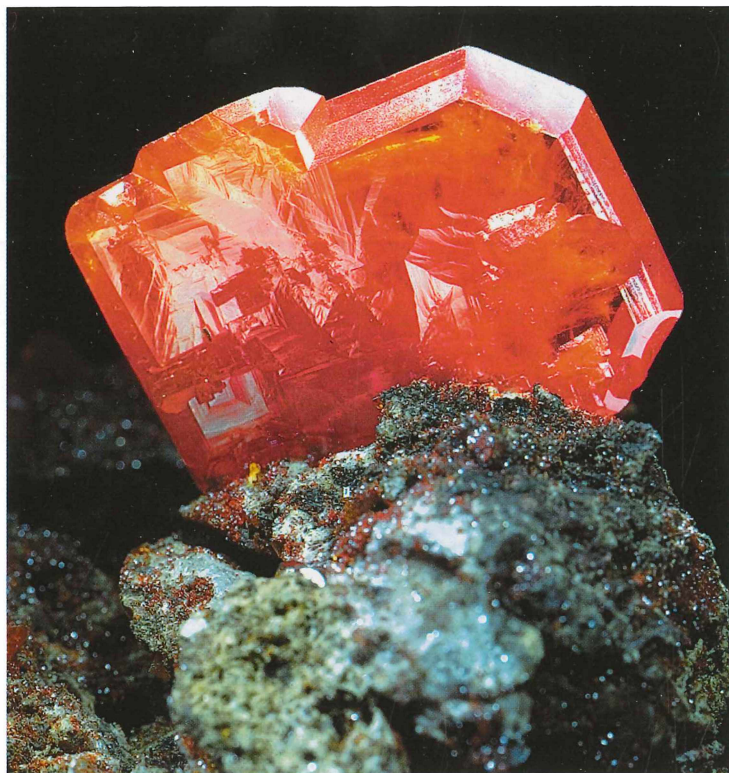
Precious opal
from Czerwenitza
(presently Dubnik),
Slovakia. With its 595 g,
this opal is considered
the largest one ever found
in European deposits.

Maria Theresia ordered this **bouquet of gem stones** for her husband's mineralogical cabinet. The bouquet is made out of 2.102 diamonds and 761 precious and semiprecious stones. The leaves are made out of green silk, the vase is cut out of rock crystal. This bouquet is one of the most precious items of the Natural History Museum.





Perfect **diamond crystal** with a diameter of 1 centimetre in its matrix from Du Toits Pan in South Africa. Diamonds in their matrix are considered a big rarity nowadays.



Wonderful **wulfenite crystal** of three centimetres diameter from the Red Cloud Mine in Arizona, USA. The mineral Wulfenite was first described in the late 18th century by the Austrian mineralogist Abbé Franz Xaver Baronet von Wulfen. Hence it was named after him a century later.



Halite (rock salt) from Wieliczka, Poland.

In Wieliczka was the largest salt deposit of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. In the show halls are many halite stages from these mines, among them one with 1.000 kg.



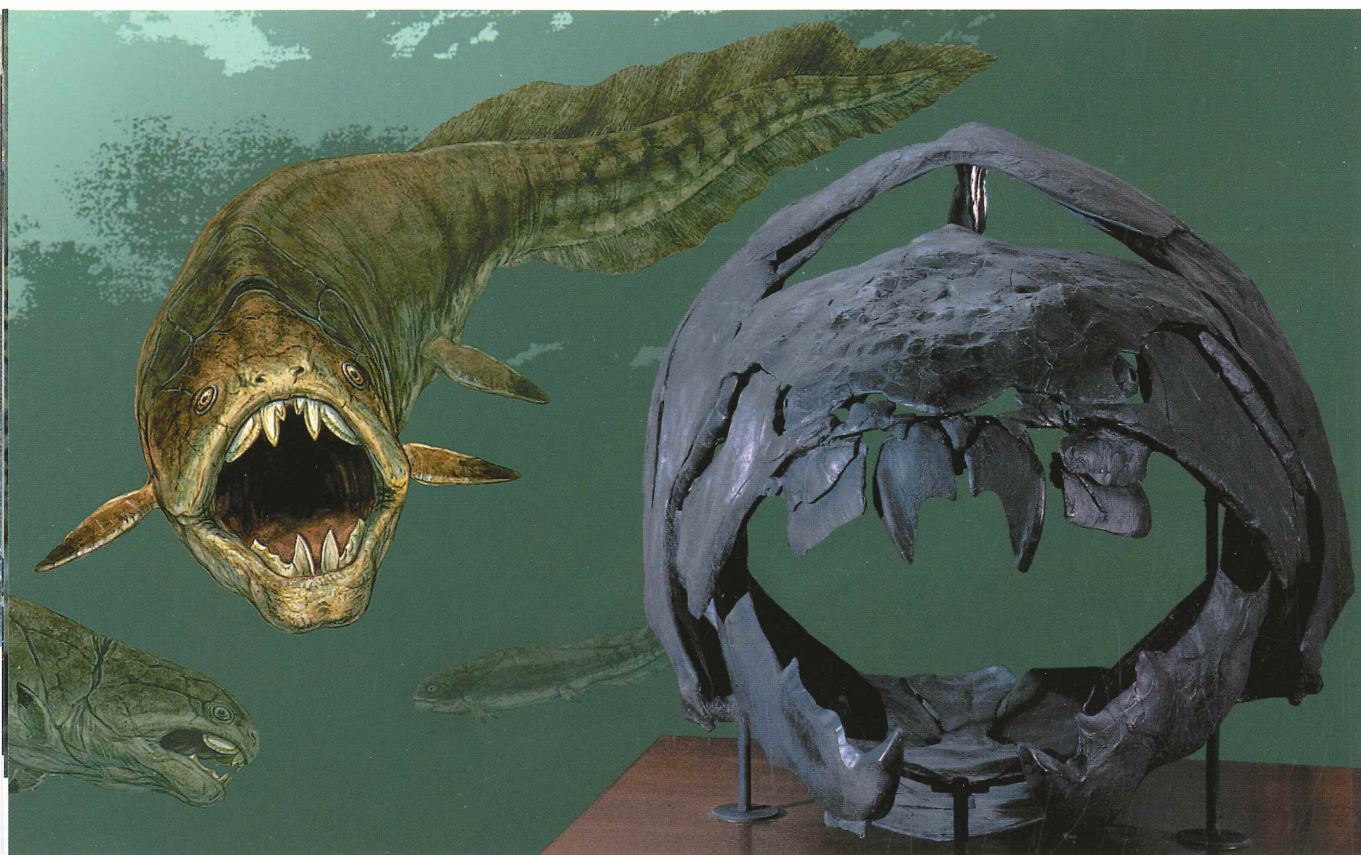
Epidote stage from Knappenwand in Untersulzbach, Salzburg. Epidote is a widely distributed mineral, but such well grown crystals are rather rare. In the Knappenwand Austria has one of the formerly most important epidote deposits in the world. In the cavities of these mountains bizarre, blackish-green crystals in unusual numbers were often found.

This wonderful **emerald stage from Colombia** was considered for a long time a present of the Mexican Aztec king Montezuma to Hernando Cortéz. Therefore it is called "**Montezuma's emerald**". But this object was artificially glued together of several smaller crystals. Originally this piece made part of the famous "Kunst- und Wunderkammer" of Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol at Ambras castle near Innsbruck, Tyrol.



Large **amethyst geode** with dark violet crystals from Serra do Mar in Brazil. The shining crystals form in gas bubbles inside volcanic rocks.





View of the skull and the reconstruction of the **placoderm fish *Dunkleosteus terelli*** from Cleveland, Ohio, USA, 370 million years old. With a body length of nine metres *Dunkleosteus* was the largest carnivore of the Devonian era. It is proven by fossil stomach contents that this dangerous armour-plated fish even attacked sharks.



“horned” trilobite ***Haploichoides conicotuberculatus***, St. Petersburg, Russia, about 450 million years old. Trilobites were among the most successful animals of the Palaeozoic. They first appeared 540 million years ago in the Cambrian period and soon developed many different forms. Their body is divided into a head, a segmented body and a tail. From these three body parts derives the name “trilobites”, meaning “three lobes”. Like in a knight’s armour, the plates of the protecting outer skeleton were connected by joints and hinges.



The palaeontological collection shows the evolution of life on earth from the last 2.700 million years. Precious fossils, skeletons and imprints testify the existence of extinct animals and plants. Fossils from all over the world, but mainly from Central and South-eastern Europe can be seen in the collection.

Pteridosperm *Autunia conferta* from Lebach, Germany, 270 million years old. Pteridosperms, resembling ferns and related to conifers, lived from the Devonian to the Jurassic period.



Ammonites, petrified shells from cephalopodes from Canada and France, about 100 million years old.

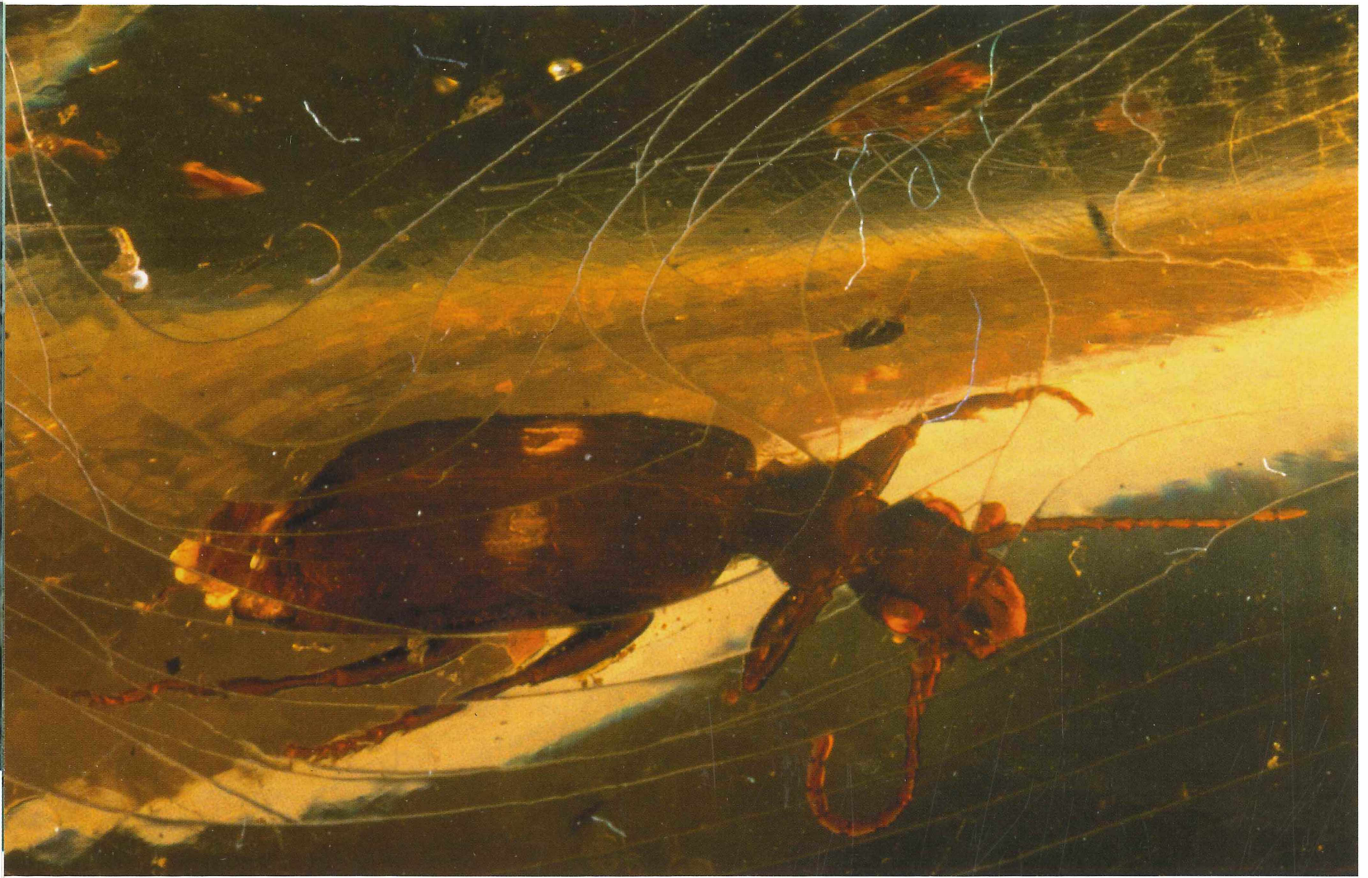


The **preservation of mother-of-pearl** is very rare. Besides the dinosaurs, ammonites were probably the most characteristic animals of the Mesozoic. They became extinct together with the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.



Reconstruction of a coral reef from the Upper Triassic Limestone Alps, 210 million years ago.

Algae and corals formed reefs in the Triassic period. When the Alps were formed, sediments were folded and uplifted and made part of the Limestone Alps.



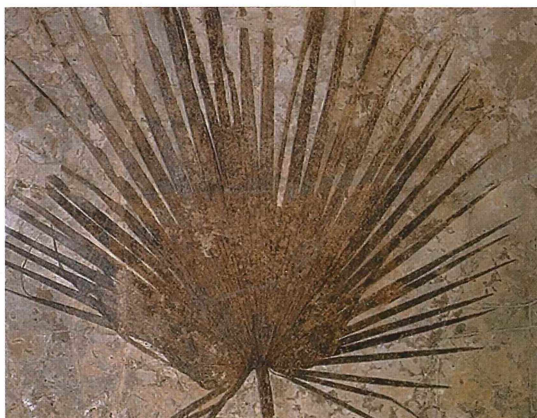
Ground beetle (Carabidae) in Baltic amber

This beetle became embedded in soft pine resin 50 million years ago. The unusually high production of resin during the Eocene might have been a stress reaction by the trees to cooler climatic conditions.



Moonfish (Mene rhombea) from Monte Bolca, Italy.

This fish lived around 50 million years ago in a tropical coral sea. Monte Bolca is among the best localities to find fossil fish. Thanks to a donation of Baron Achille de Zigno to emperor Franz Josef I. the Natural History Museum owns one of the best collections from this site. The emperor got the fossils on the occasion of his recovery from the 1853 attempt.



Palm leaf with 1,8 metre diameter, Wyoming, USA, 50–48 million years old.

An almost complete skeleton of the **dinotherium Prodeinotherium bavaricum**, 17 million years old, hall no. 9. Dinotheria differ from modern elephants by wearing tusks in the lower jaw. Long before the mammoths dinotheria were already widely spread over Europe.





Dinosaur hall: Next to the Jurassic carnivorous *Allosaurus fragilis* from the USA is a skull of Cretaceous *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Above these skull and neck of a *Diplodocus carnegiei* with a total length of 26 m can be seen.



Model of an **Oviraptor embryo** in its eggshell. Oviraptors lived about 80 million years ago in the Cretaceous. Since their skeletons were frequently found together with eggs, scientists named them Oviraptor, which means "egg-thief". But embryos found fossilised inside the eggs later, confirmed that the adults were most probably breeding adults instead.

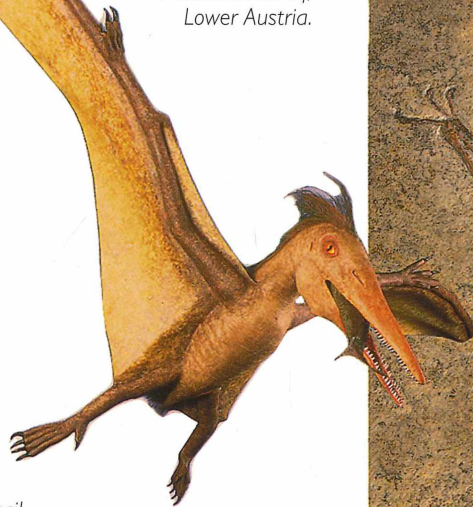


Skull of *Triceratops horridus*
(late Cretaceous, 65 million years ago),
South Dakota, USA,
replica.

Triceratops could grow to a length of eight metres and weigh six to nine tons. Thus it was the largest of all the horned dinosaurs. The head of this dinosaur was longer than in any other land animal. Horns and neck shield were larger in males. Probably their size decided over the social position within the group, but they could also be used for defence. Triceratops ate mainly fibrous plants like cycads and palms. These were ripped off with the pointed beak and chewed with the molars.

Model of *Ornithocheirus bunzeli*, the only known pterosaur from the Austrian Cretaceous. Its fingerbones and a fragment of a lower jaw were found in sediments 80 million years old together with bones and skin plates of small dinosaurs near Muthmannsdorf, Lower Austria.

With a wingspan of hardly 1,5 metres this is one of the smaller members of the pterosaurs.



Confuciusornis sanctus – a fossil bird from China, 130 million years old.

The claws on the wings are a heritage of its dinosaur relatives. The preservation of the feather frill, the pinions and tail feathers in this individual is exceptionally good and make it one of the best specimens world-wide. The long tail feathers are seen as a distinguishing character for males. Contrary to the older *Archaeopteryx*, *Confuciusornis* was an active flying bird without teeth.

Pterodactylus kochi – like the remnants of *Archaeopteryx* this outstandingly well preserved specimen of a pterosaur was found in Solnhofen, Bavaria. Between the extended 4th finger and the body the flying membrane was stretched out, similar to modern bats. It's the clearly visible flying membranes, which make this fossil so valuable to science. This pterosaur lived 140 million years ago at the shoreline of a tropical lagoon.



Reconstructed life picture



Idealised image of Stone Age lifestyle, painted by Hugo Darnaut, hall 11. This is a reconstruction of Palaeolithic life with the knowledge of the 19th century.

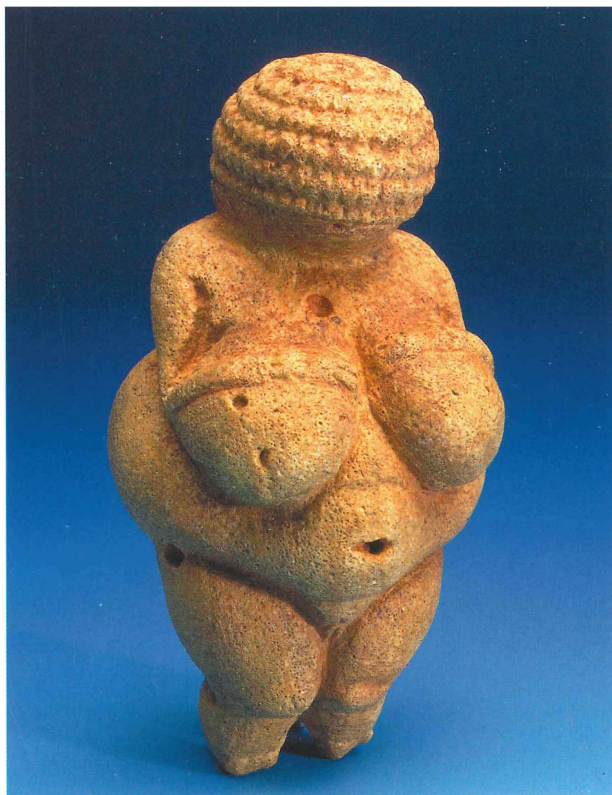


Fanny from Galgenberg (gallow mountain), named after the 19th century famous Viennese dancer Fanny Elsler, was found near Stratzing, Krems-Rehberg, Lower Austria. This slender stone figure is about seven cm high and 32.000 years old. It is one of the oldest sculptures in the world showing a human.

Palaeolithic stone tools from Willendorf, Lower Austria, about 25.000 years old.

The prehistorical collection of the Natural History Museum derived originally from the Anthropological-ethnographical Department. Whereas other important prehistorical collections were mainly seen as collections of national antiques, the one in Vienna was laid out to present the diversity of European cultures from the very beginning. Today the Prehistorical Department houses several 100.000 objects of all the different periods. The core of the collection is made up of the items from the Hallstatt culture. Since 1961 the department carries out archaeological research in the prehistorical salt mines of Hallstatt and since 1994 also in its cemetery area.

The **Venus of Willendorf** is, with an age of 25.000 years, the most famous example of palaeolithic figures showing a human. Venus figures of this kind were produced all over Europe 20.000–25.000 years ago. Until now more than 100 of such female figures made out of stone, clay or ivory were found. What they all have in common is, that they are by far no natural portraits, but probably symbols of fertility. The Venus of Willendorf (Lower Austria) is eleven centimetres high and was cut out of fine-grained limestone with flint tools. Originally it was thickly painted with ochre, a commonly used mineral dyestuff, which was possibly a symbol for life.



This **pot from Hallstatt culture** (7th / 6th century B.C., hall 13) from Sopron, Hungary, is decorated with scenes showing weaving, spinning, musicians and dancers. Such illustrations give interesting clues on life during the Hallstatt period.



Bull from Býčí skála, a cave in Moravia, Czech Republic, Hallstatt culture. This bronze figure is one of the best animal sculptures from Late Iron Age.

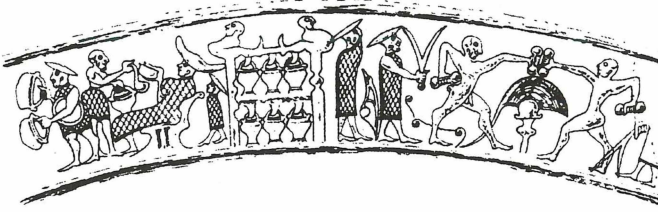


Swords from Middle and Late Bronze Age (15th to 9th century B.C.)



Ceramics and sickle from the Neolithic, Brunn am Gebirge, Lower Austria. These are the until now oldest findings of farming culture in Austria. The earliest traces of settlements in Brunn am Gebirge date from 5.700 B.C.

Situla from Kuffern, Lower Austria, 5th century B.C.: the decoration on this bronze vessel shows interesting scenes of drinking-bouts, fist-fights and other contests. These scenes give a deep insight into life of this time.



Bronze scoop,
6th century B.C.,
found in a grave of
the Hallstatt cemetery,
Upper Austria. The upper
rim is decorated with a
finely engraved ornament.
The handle has the form
of a neat, followed by
a smaller one.

Packbag from Hallstatt,
10th / 9th century B.C.
This "rucksack" made of cow
hide was used as a conveyor
in the Hallstatt salt mine.
Fortified by wooden ledges
at the sides, the bag could
be tilted and emptied
out in a simple way.



**Shoe, cap, wooden spade and
pickaxe from Hallstatt.** Findings
from the eastern group of the
salt mines, Hallstatt culture,
8th to 4th century B.C. The cap
and the shoe, made of tanned
fur and leather, are neatly sewn.

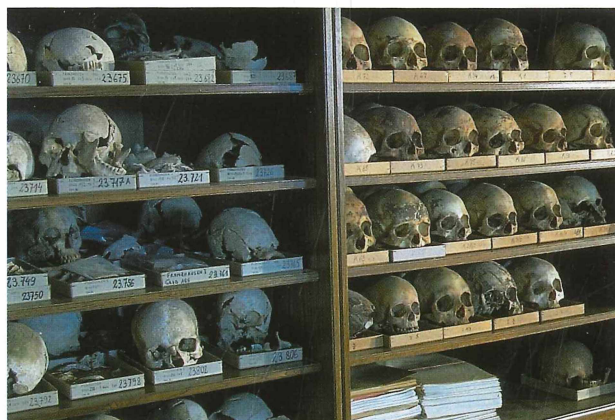




Portrait of the hunter from the Younger Palaeolithic

Reconstruction of a man from the Younger Palaeolithic

Anatomical modern people lived already in Central Europe 40.000 years ago. They did not only use spears, but as an innovation in hunting techniques, they had even invented spear-throwers, which could give a spear a starting speed of 100 km/h and enable them to kill large prey at a distance of 30 metres. This reconstruction was made at studio Daynes, Paris, with the aid of the latest scientific results and forensic methods. It is based on the skull of an adult man from Cro Magnon I, Les Eyzies de Tayac, Dordogne, France, who lived 24.000 years ago. His skeletal remains were found already in 1868 and gave the name to many other findings of the classical early Homo sapiens.

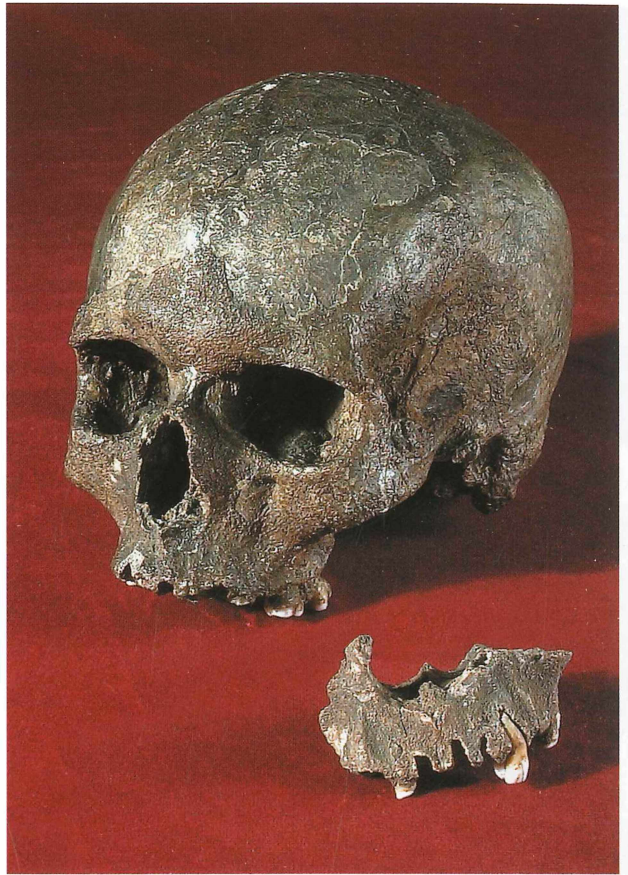


Osteological collection

The osteological collection (skeleton collection) at the Natural History Museum Vienna is one of the largest of such collections in the world, presently housing about 40.000 objects from Europe and other continents. The oldest specimen dates to approximately 31.000 years, the youngest are modern. They form the basis for research on the origin and development of humans and for the analysis of the conditions and mechanisms which gave rise to this evolution.

Skull from Mladeč, oldest skull of a Homo sapiens at the Natural History Museum.

This skull of an early Homo sapiens was found in 1881/82 together with other human skeletal remains and archaeological objects at Prince Johanns-cave near Mladeč (formerly Lautsch, Czech Republic). With an age of 31.000 years (Upper Palaeolithic, Aurignacien) these findings are the oldest human skeletal remains the museum owns. The findings are in the centre of scientific discussion on the biological and cultural evolution of early modern humans. This skull is probably from an 18 year old female, the maxillary fragment from an adult male.



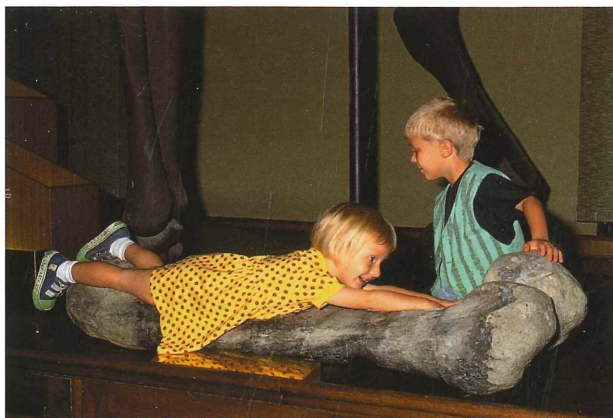
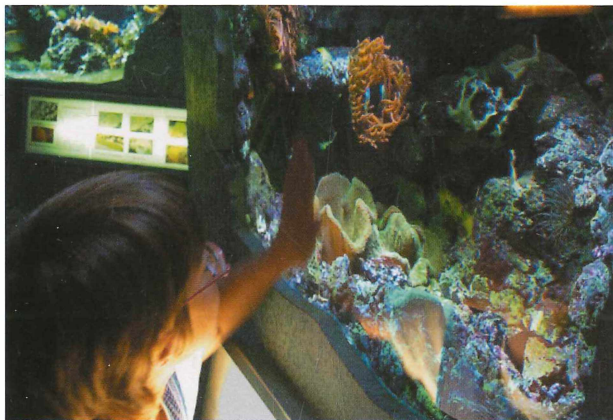
Enigmatic finding of human skeletons from Hallstatt time in a pit, found at Stillfried at the March, Lower Austria (in situ reconstruction of the skeletons).

The skeletons of the three adults and four children show anatomical characters that indicate close relationship. The group lived around 750 B.C., at a time when cremation was in use. Even with intensive anthropologic and forensic investigations the course of death could not be found. Maybe these seven people died from an illness or they died an unnatural death (possibly poisoning) and were therefore buried in a pit belonging to the settlement.





Children exploring a real mammoth tooth



Looking – Playing – Exploring on your own

For young scientists to be there are many different possibilities at the Natural History Museum. There is a large variety of guided tours and activities on different subjects in the exhibitions. School workshops offer the possibility to see the objects on show under a more detailed view. By independent researching, playful and creative work natural sciences can be experienced and understood.

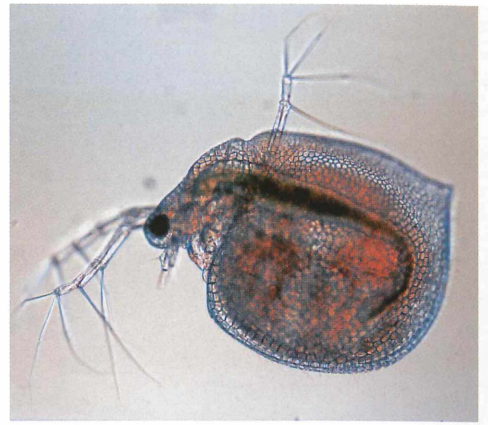
During special birthday tours the children hear many interesting facts on animals, minerals and humans. After a light meal the party continues with games, painting, handicraft and experiments.

Since 1992 courses in microscopy are offered by the education department to children and adults. The clients learn how to work with different types of microscopes and how to do slide preparation of various objects.

A recent offer are the “science pathways”. The museum’s scientists report on their current studies and give the opportunity to visit the museum “hands on” even to adults.



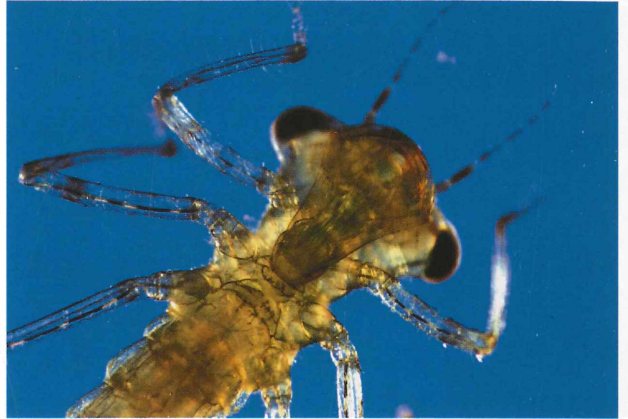
The most beautiful animals in the microscope – the freshwater mysid *Limnomysis*



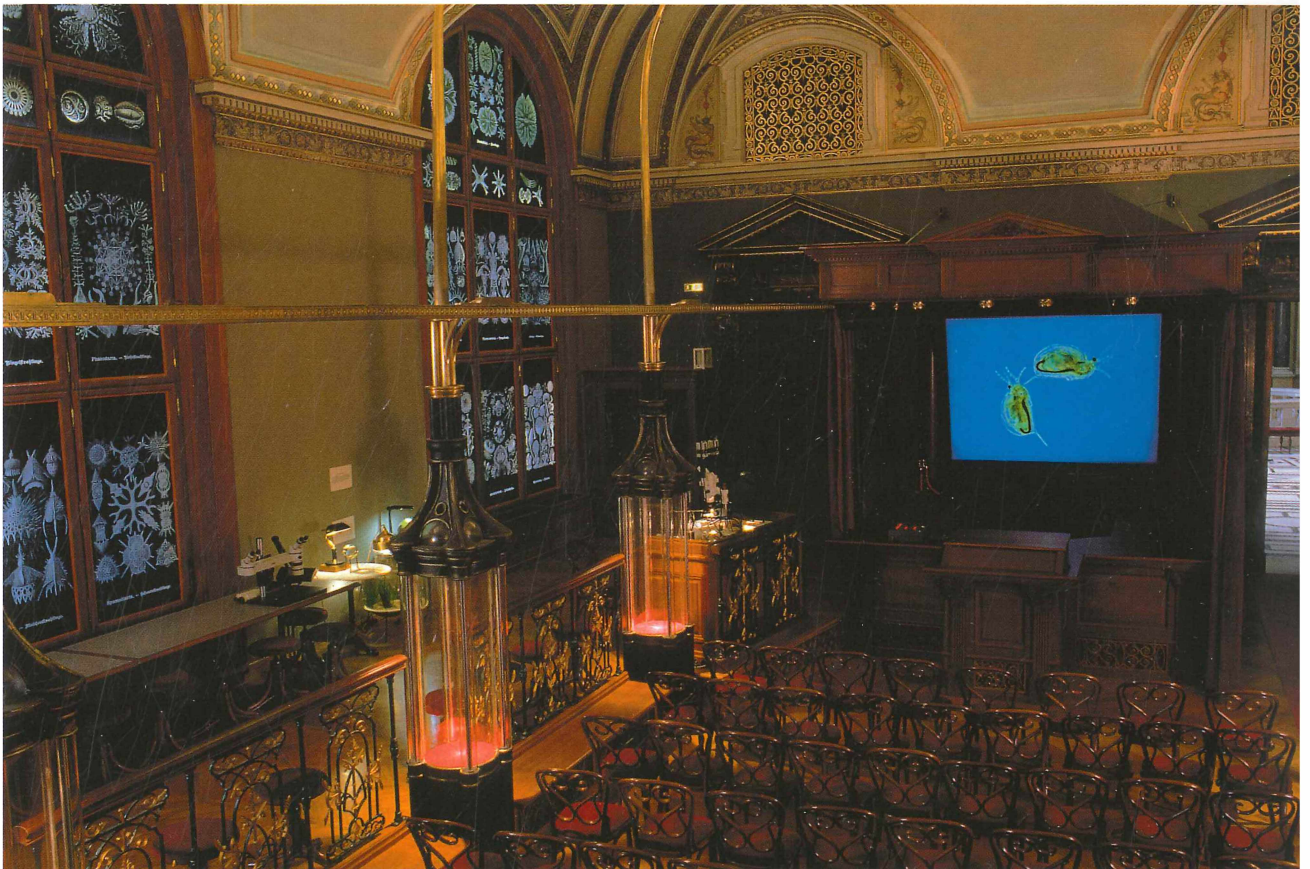
Water fleas are small crustaceans and not at all related to common fleas, which are insects.

Microtheatre

In the specially designed hall 21 the 3-D microtheatre, unique in the world, awaits the visitor. Here one can see the technically highest developed live-projection of the microscopic universe. Tiny animals and plants are shown live on a cinema-screen and thus opening an otherwise invisible world to the visitor.



A tiny *damselfly larva* – seen through the microscope.





Giant Clam (*Tridacna gigas*) in the mollusc hall

This clam from the Indopacific coral seas inspired people since times unknown to eerie stories. There are unjustified tales of pearl divers, who were jammed in by the giant valves of the shell and drowned. The shell is real, the vividly coloured body is a model.



Differences do not only exist between different species. Even within a single species many variants may exist, of which this **Senatorial Scallop** (*Chlamys senatoria*) from the Indopacific is a good example.

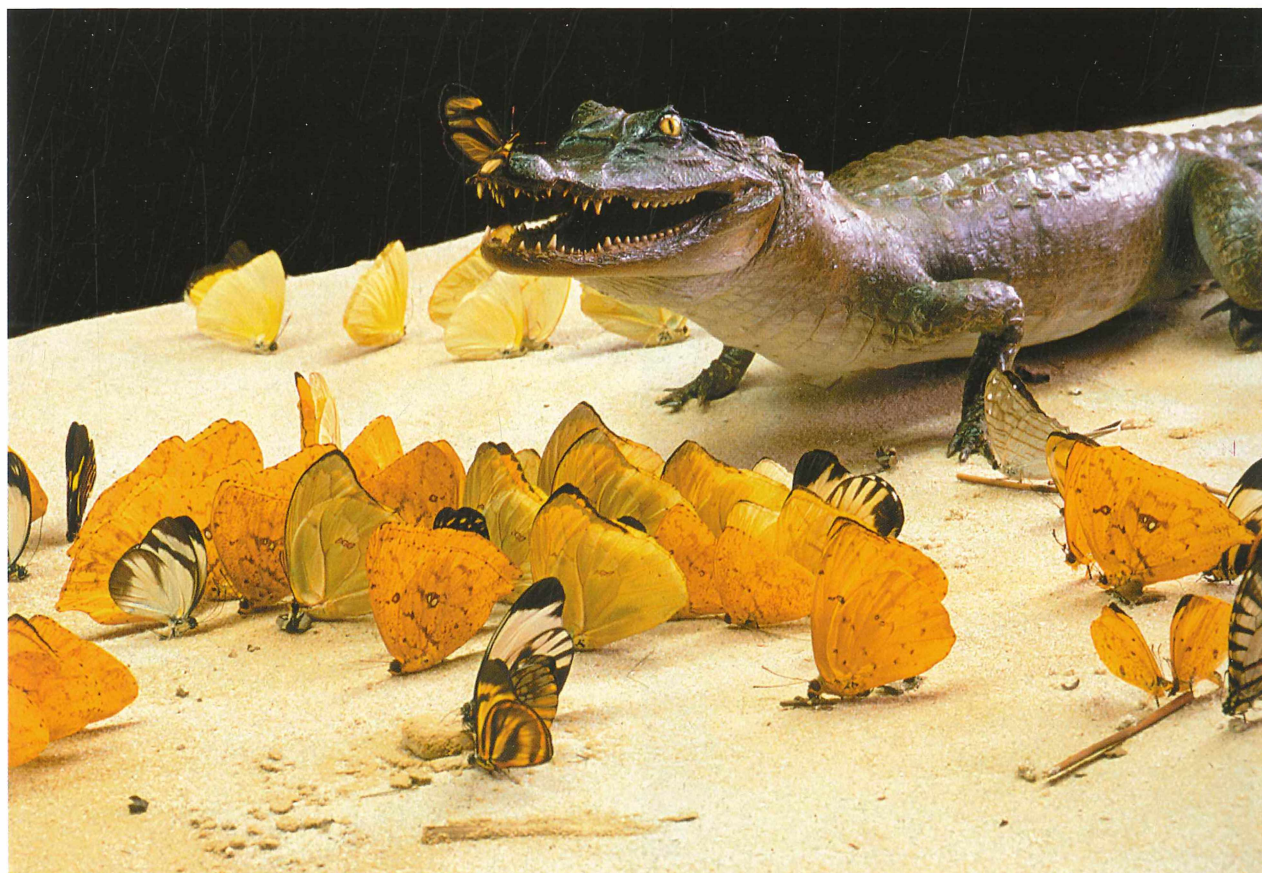
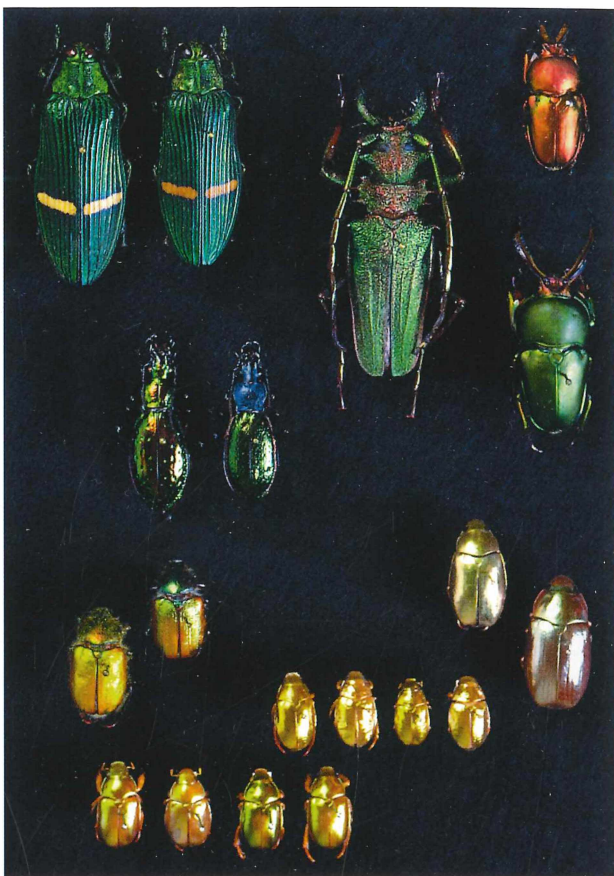


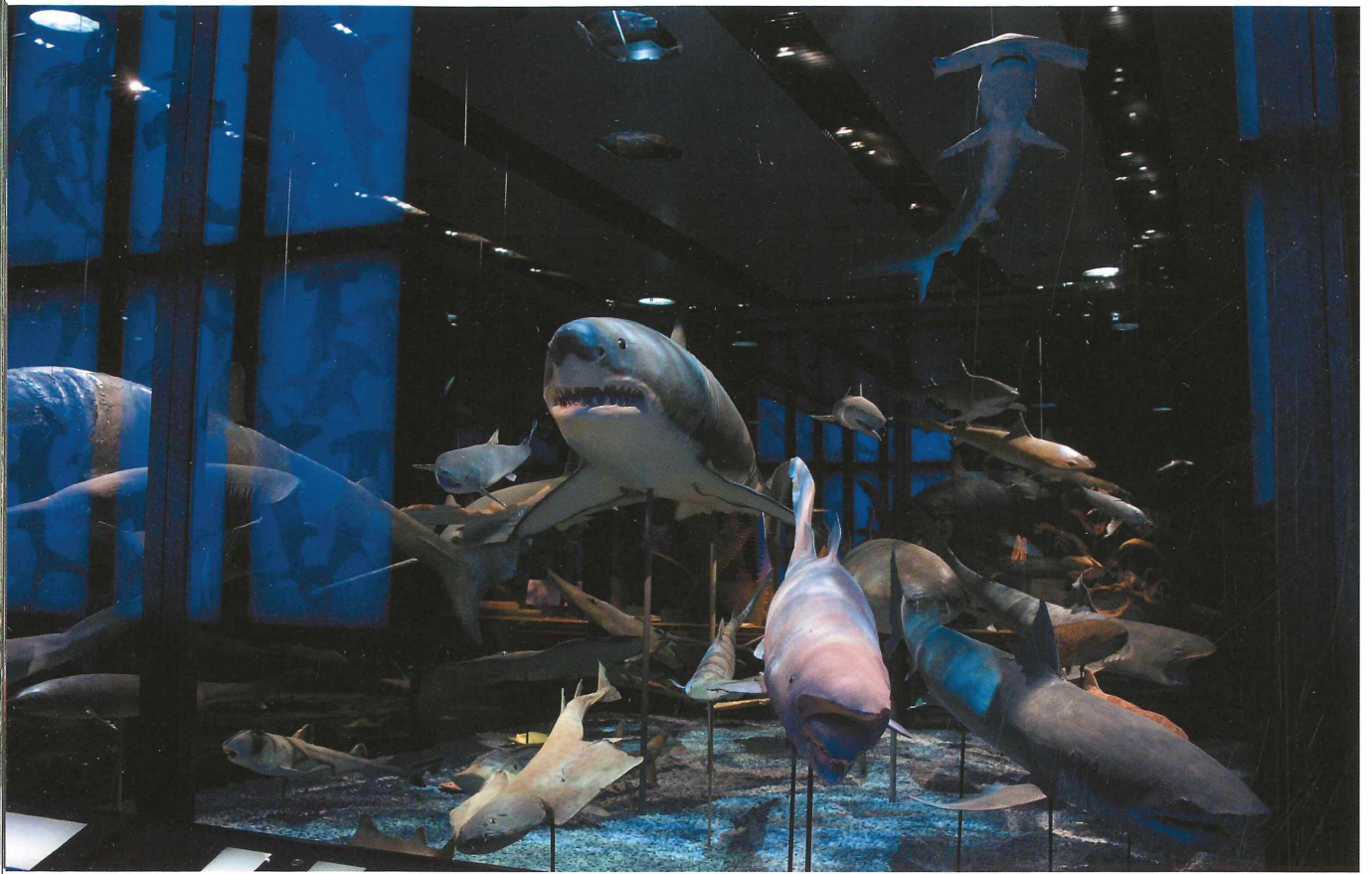
The **Pearly Nautilus** (*Nautilus pompilius*) is of a very archaic type. The turn of its chambered, bilateral symmetrical shell resembles the Archimedean screw. Due to its system of chambers the nautilus can regulate its buoyancy under water. This system exists since 300 million years and has already been in function by its distant fossil relatives, the ammonites.

Insects, with more than 900.000 species known to science, are the most variable group of animals in nature. The insect collection of the Natural History Museum houses some eight million specimens of **beetles from all over the world**.

The Zoological Departments of the Natural History Museum in Vienna belong to the most important scientific institutions in Austria. With several million specimens these collections are among the largest and most valuable ones in the world. The arrangement of the zoological collections is in large parts a systematically one, which means the animals are put together according to their relationship. This way of preservation was planned from the very beginning and is largely kept until today, contrary to many other nature museums. This systematic presentation makes the Natural History Museum Vienna a “museum within a museum” – and in a closer sense also a museum of evolution.

Dioramas complete the systematic arrangement: **Model of a sand bench in the Amazon**. Tropical butterflies take essential nutrient salts from the nostrils of a Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*).

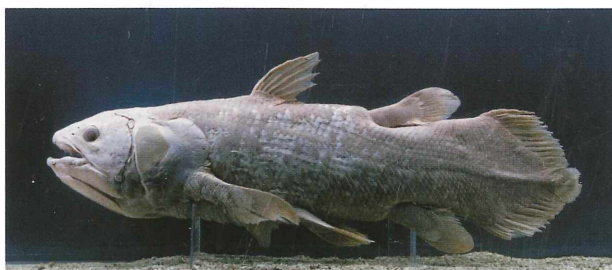




40 taxidermy specimens of sharks, rays and chimaeras give a fascinating overview of the cartilaginous fishes in this show-case. Among others a big female White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), one of 50 Goblin Sharks (*Mitsukurina owstoni*) known to science and a baby Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) are on display. Due to finning and overfishing 100 to 200 millions of these ecologically important predators of the sea are killed each year. Therefore many species of sharks are threatened by extinction today.



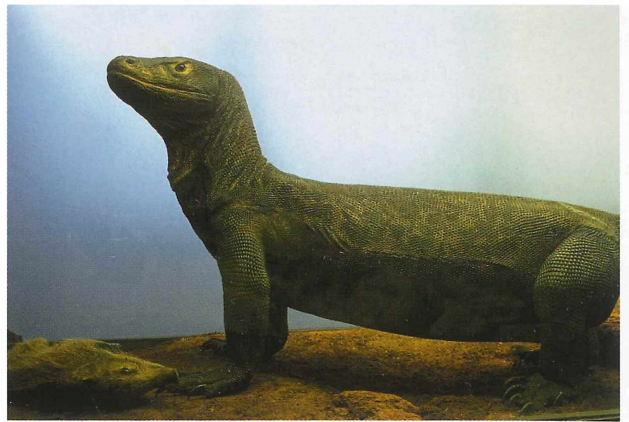
The **Blue-spotted Ribbontail Ray** (*Taeniura lymna*) lives in the Red Sea and the Indopacific and likes to hide in the sand.



The **Coelacanth** (*Latimeria chalumnae*) – a living fossil. Until to its sensational discovery in 1938 coelacanths were considered extinct since the Cretaceous period.

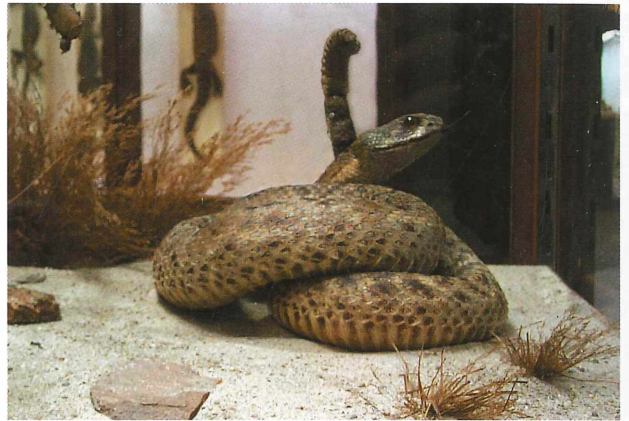
Komodo Dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*) –
the largest lizard in the world.

A fully grown male Komodo Dragon can reach up to three metres length and weigh 135 kilograms. This rare monitor lizard lives in the islands Komodo, Rintja, Padar and on the western end of Flores, Indonesia, feeding mainly on Hog Deer and Wild Boar. The Natural History Museum Vienna is one of the few museums owning two specimens of this very rare species.



Western Diamondback Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*)

By vibrating its rattle, a rattle snake emits loud rustling warning sounds. It is one of the most dangerous poisonous snakes.



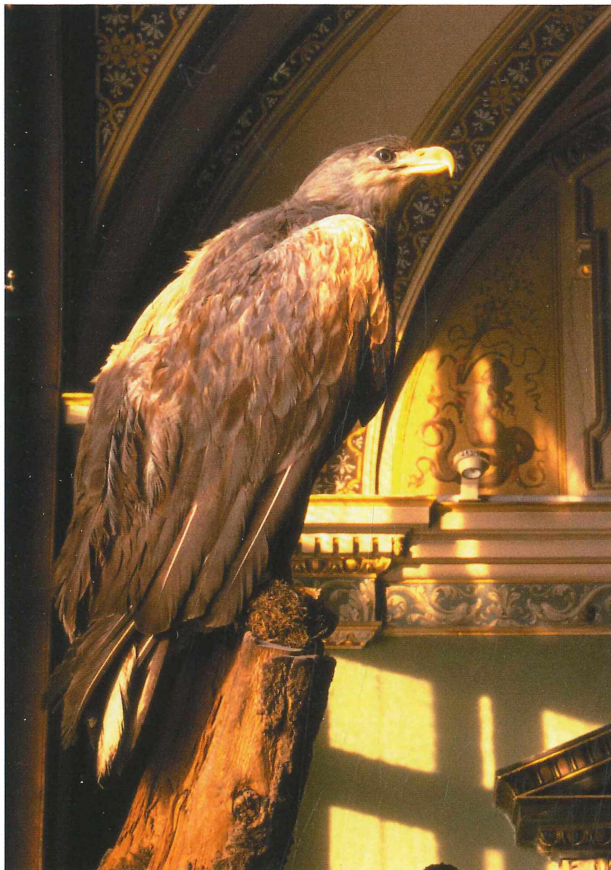
Reptile collection with Indian Gavials (Gharials)
(*Gavialis gangeticus*)

In the show-case in the foreground a pair of Indian Gavials from northern India are exhibited. Nowadays these crocodiles, which are more confined to the water than other crocodiles, are very rare. They feed mainly on fish, but eat also smaller mammals and waterfowl. For people they are harmless.





Greater and Lesser Birds of Paradise
(*Paradisaea apoda*, *P. minor*) from **Papua-New Guinea**
Whereas females and immature birds of paradise are drab, males (some only during the breeding season) wear colourful shining plumage with long tail feathers.



"The last eagles" shot by Crown Prince Rudolf

On January 21, 1889, nine days before his suicide in Mayerling, Lower Austria, Crown Prince Rudolf shot these two White-tailed Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in the Danube wetlands near Orth, Lower Austria. The birds came to the Natural History Museum as part of the prince's assets.

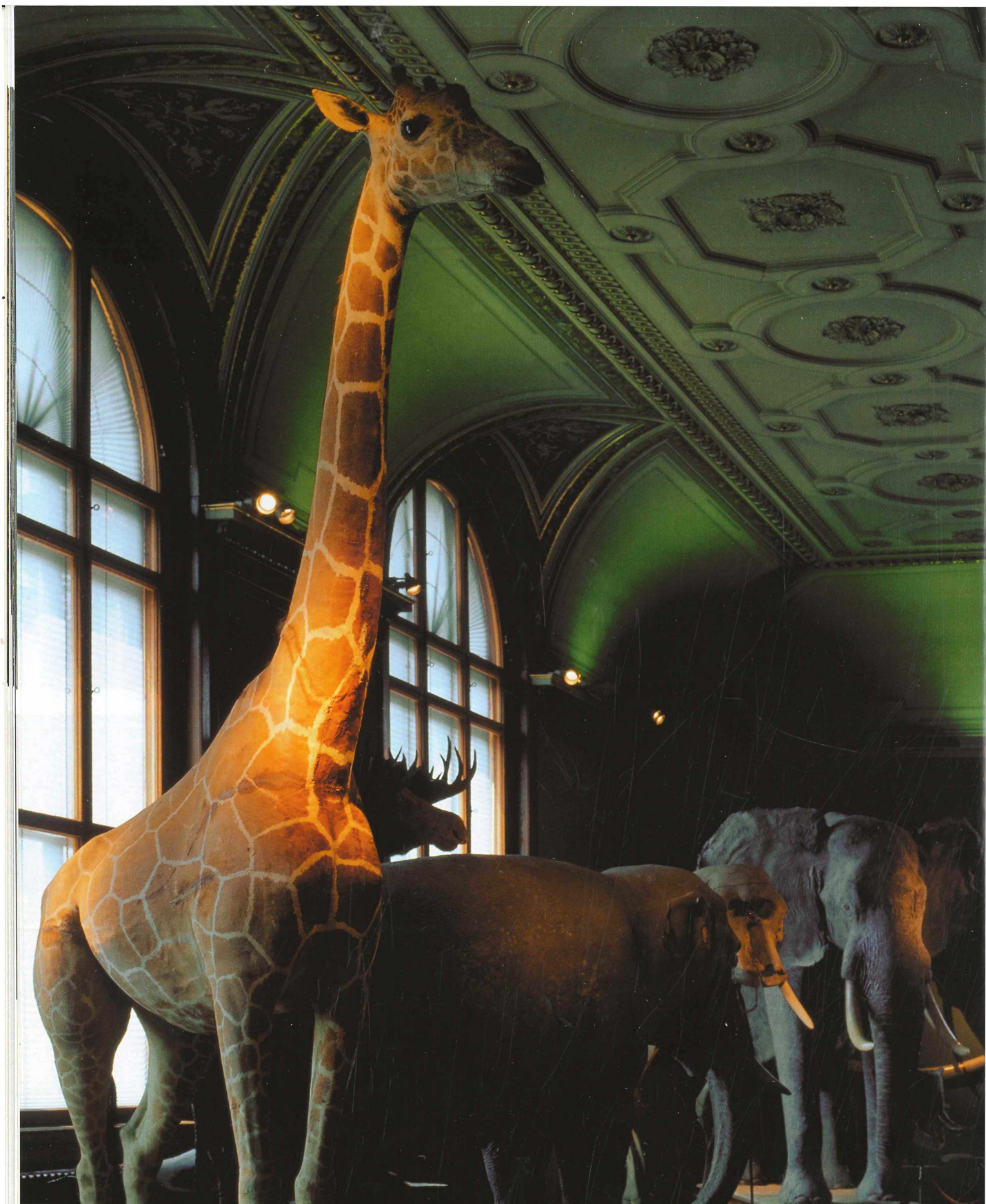
Macaws are among the most magnificent birds in the canopy of the tropical rainforest. Already in the first half of the 19th century an expedition initiated by the Austrian imperial family went to Brazil to explore the tropical fauna and flora. Today, too, Austrian scientists work in South America's rainforests. Ornithologists of our museum contributed to the famous Surumoni project in Venezuela, exploring the rainforest canopy from an enormous crane.



Snowy Owls (*Nyctea scandiaca*) from Norway

These two Snowy Owls, female (left) and male (right), were on show at the Norwegian pavilion at the International Hunting Exhibition in Vienna's Prater in 1910 before they came to the museum.





Hall of large mammals

In the foreground a Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), behind it an Asian (*Elephas maximus*) and an African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*).

Mountain Goat (*Oreamnos americanus*)

The Mountain Goat lives in North America's high mountains, the whole year above the snow line. Its white fur, which it wears already as a new-born kid, is a perfect camouflage.



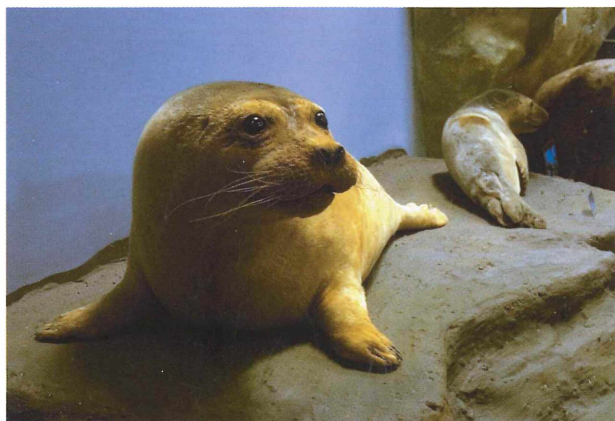
Black, White and Indian Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*, *Ceratotherium simum*, *Rhinoceros unicornis*)

Rhinos are endangered animals. Their priceless horns are their doom, as they were and are unfortunately still used in pulverized form as aphrodisiacs and other traditional medicines, equally useless.





Alpine Ibexes (*Capra ibex*) roam high mountains between the upper forest line and the zone of perpetual snow. They were extinct in large parts of the Alps but became reintroduced.

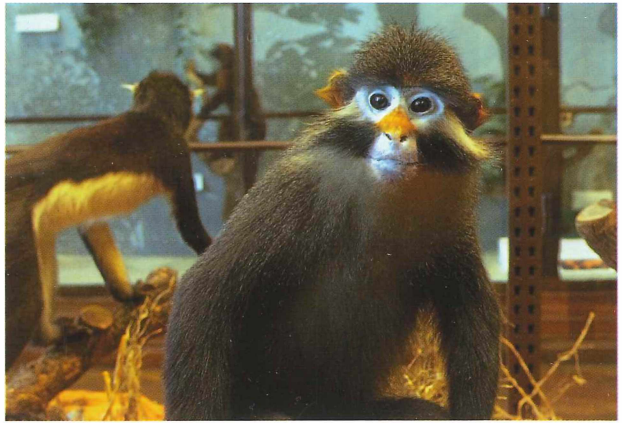


Harbour Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) are heavily endangered due to overhunting, lack of food because of overfishing and pollution of the oceans.



The **Brown Bear** (*Ursus arctos*) is the only indigenous bear species in Austria. Until to the end of the 18th century Brown Bears lived all over the Alpine region. About 150 years ago Austria's bear population died out. Since then some single bears immigrated. Presently 25–30 are supposed to live in Austria in the Karawanken, Carnic and Gailtal Alps in Carinthia and in Eastern Tyrol as well as in the Northern Limestone Alps in Styria, Upper and Lower Austria.

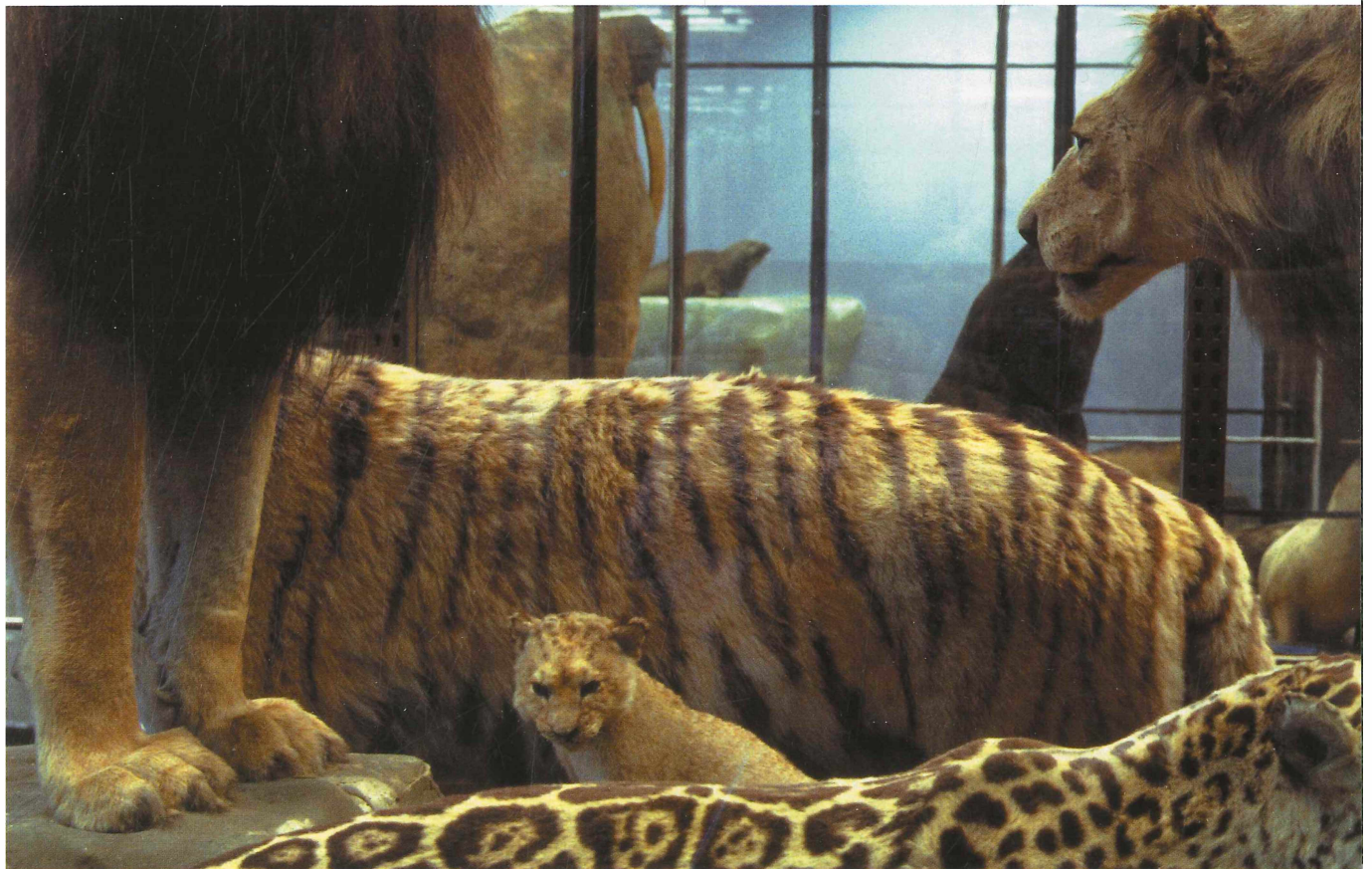
Red-eared Monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrotis*)
 from the rainforests of West Africa
 Guenons live socially in forests and savannas.
 Their striking colourful markings, especially in
 the face, are essential for species recognition.



Honzo – the grumpy Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*)
 In 1952 the Austrian big-game hunter Ernst Zwilling brought a
 male Chimpanzee from Cameroon to Schönbrunn Zoo, Vienna.
 In the zoo the originally peaceful ape became irascible and
 intolerable. Due to its choleric character it had to be kept by
 its own. After its death Honzo came to the museum,
 like many other specimens from the zoo.



View into the show-case of the big cats with Jaguar
 (*Panthera onca*), Lion (*Panthera leo*) and Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)





*Workshop of the zoological preparation:
preparator Robert Illek with his team.*



*Drawer with bird skins in the bird collection. Innumerable
preparates are stored in the depots of the scientific collections.*



Behind the scenes the Natural History Museum houses breathtaking archives of biodiversity, which are among the most valuable ones world-wide. More than 20 million collection objects are archived, cared for and worked on by more than 250 collaborators. Studies on evolution and systematics are the centrepiece of research.

Four storeys under the ground is the **air-conditioned deep store**. Here, too, collection items for further scientific research are stored.

*Preparing of plants on a mountain summit
in Peru's cloud forest.*

Researching, collecting, exploring the world

The collections of the Natural History Museum became steadily enlarged during expeditions, excavations, by donations, exchange and during research projects.

The Natural History Museum Vienna is one of **the** research institutions in the world. More than 60 scientists dedicate their work mainly to projects on the systematics of animals and plants, geology and prehistory. The inventory of nature is by far not completed yet – there are still many new species to be discovered and named.

Prehistorians at work: excavations at the Hallstatt cemetery are one of the research priorities of the Prehistorical Department.

Entomologists (= experts on insects) in the **cloud forests of Ceram, Indonesia**. During the journey through this largely unexplored island hundreds of beetle species were collected for the museum.

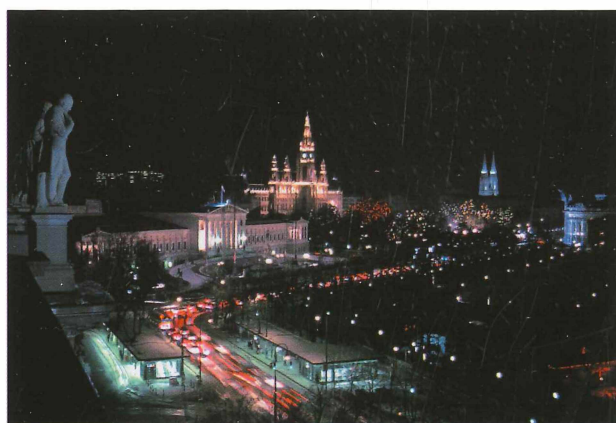




View from the roof of the Natural History Museum



Since June 1998 Vienna's first large solar power station is fixed onto the roof of the museum. Arithmetically it compensates for the current consumption of the lights for four show halls.



Guided tours to the roof of the museum are regularly offered. From a height of some 30 metres the visitors enjoy the wonderful view over the historical city of Vienna including the Ringstraße (ring boulevard) with its magnificent buildings.

Stone sculptures showing famous natural scientists from various countries are mounted along the balustrades on the roof.

Even on cold winter evenings the view from the roof of the museum is enchanting. Despite low temperatures the Christmas market in front of the town hall and the illuminated city make the visit to the roof an unforgettable experience.

NATURHISTORISCHES MUSEUM – INFORMATION PAGE

Postal address: Burgring 7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: +43 (1) 521 77 / 0

Entrance: Maria Theresien Platz, 1010 Vienna
homepage: <http://www.nhm-wien.ac.at>

opening hours: Monday, Thursday to Sunday 9.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Tuesday closed

Wednesday 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

also closed: January 1st, May 1st, November 1st and December 25th

Departments at the Natural History Museum

Executive Board

I. Zoological Department

II. Zoological Department

III. Zoological Department

Botanical Department

Geological-Palaeontological Department

Department of Karst and Speleology

Department for Mineralogy and Petrography

Department for Anthropology

Department for Prehistory

Department for Ecology

Archives for Science History

Department for Exhibition and Education

Department for PR and Marketing

Libraries

Additional offers



Association of the “FRIENDS OF THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM”

The aim of this association is to support the scientific work of the museum. The “friends” are able to buy collections, to do scientific projects and to edit publications, which otherwise could not be achieved with the finances of the museum alone.

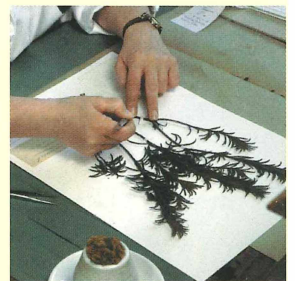
To its members the association offers free entrance to the museum, free visits to lectures and guided tours for the “friends”, the monthly programme and quarterly the journal “Universum” with reports on the museum. Exclusively for the members of the “friends” various excursions within Austria and abroad are offered. All of them are guided by experienced scientists of the Natural History Museum.

If you want to know more about the “FRIENDS”, please write to “Freunde NHMW”, Natural History Museum Vienna, Burgring 7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria

VOLUNTEERS

at the Natural History Museum

Many volunteers carry out highly esteemed work in the scientific departments. Caring for valuable books in the libraries, doing herbarium specimens in the Botanical Department, feeding data into computers and working at the information desk in the entrance hall are some of their activities. If you are interested in volunteering at the museum, we will be glad if you contact us.



NATIONAL PARK ACADEMY in Petronell, Lower Austria

Branch office of the Natural History Museum near the National Park Donau-Auen (Danube Wetlands)

From April to October the National Park Academy offers guided tours on land and by boat. During eventful excursions the Danube is crossed with rubber dinghies. Short walks give an idea on the ecology of plants and animals of the inundation areas.

Bookings for excursions, lectures in schools, courses in microscopy and various seminars can be done at the Department for Ecology of the Natural History Museum.

The seminars are given at the “Nationalparkhaus der Jugend” (Lange Gasse 28, 2404 Petronell). This low-energy house close to the National Park Donau-Auen offers to stay over night, to give lectures, seminars and workshops on microscopy.



ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Ausstellungskataloge und Saalführer Naturhistorisches Museum Wien](#)

Jahr/Year: 2002

Band/Volume: [4_2002](#)

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