



Catalogue of the dry specimens in the carcinological collection of the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil

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Abstract

The carcinological Collection of the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo (MZUSP) contains more than 400,000 specimens. Among these are 67 lots of dry specimens. This material possesses great historical value, having been collected, identified and studied by eminent researchers. The dry specimens have now been restored by cleaning, dehydration, assembly and sealing. We provide a list of the dry lots, with information on the collection locality, collector and record number. The collection comprises 53 species in 5 infraorders: Brachyura (44 species), Anomura (3), Caridea (1), Palinura (1) and Astacidea (4).

Key words: carcinological collection, Crustacea, Museu de Zoologia, dry collection

Introduction

The importance of museum collections has already been discussed by various authors such as Cohen & Cressey (1969) and Manning (1991). The object of zoological collections is, through specimens and their records, to develop knowledge of the biology, systematic diversity, composition, zoogeography and evolution of biota. These collections are also an efficient resource for environmental education.

The Carcinological Collection of the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil (MZUSP) contains more than 18,000 catalogued lots and about 5,000 lots in the process of being catalogued, totaling about 400,000 specimens. This is one of the largest collections of crustaceans in Brazil and Latin America. It is ample certification of the diversity of the Brazilian crustacean fauna, and provides support for scientific and educational activities.

The dry specimens form a small proportion of the total collection. The approximately 67 lots have inestimable historical value, having been collected, identified and studied by eminent researchers. In addition, they constitute, according to Melo (1996), the initial units of the related collection discovered in 1962 in the basement of the MZUSP.

Many naturalists, such as Beniamino Bicego, Ernest Garbe, Hermann Luederwaldt, Sigmund Ernst and Richard Krone, among others, were contracted by the German zoologist Hermann Friedrich Albrecht von Ihering during his term as Director of the MZUSP (1894–1915). Their mission was to cover Brazil, searching for specimens for scientific and educational use. They were also important collaborators in the development of the carcinological collection (Lopes 1997).