

THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION, A NEW ORGANIZATION TO PROMOTE SYSTEMATIC COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTORS

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Abstract – At Louisville, Kentucky, in July 1993, a new membership supported organization was founded to represent the interests of scientific collectors, in particular amateurs, to facilitate best utilization of systematic material in scientific research, and to encourage ultimate disposition of all such collections to museums for permanent preservation. The annual dues are US \$ 15.00 for regular membership, or \$ 25.00 or more for contributing membership.

Introduction

It seems to have become fashionable to minimize the contributions to the natural sciences made by

the so called "amateur" or "avocational" worker. It seems nearly forgotten that virtually all of the great pioneer natural scientists - Audubon, Fabricius, Linnaeus, Rambur, Selys - every one were amateurs. Today most taxonomic and life history studies are being conducted by amateur scientists on their own time, and at their own expense. Most hold academic degrees in their field of interest, and many are the most knowledgeable experts on their particular group of study. It is quite ironic that governments use the enormous pool of data assembled by these same workers to help determine the status of possible at-risk fauna and flora, but at the same time they con-

tinue to proliferate regulations that make acquiring such data more difficult.

In July 1993, a new organization to be known as the *International Scientific Collectors Association (ISCA)* was formed in Louisville, Kentucky. It is a membership governed and supported organization with objectives of addressing all matters of concern to the international community of persons engaged in the pursuit of scientific knowledge derived from collecting data or systematic specimen material in all disciplines of the natural sciences. It will be a primary goal of ISCA to bring better recognition of the important contributions made to science over the years by the traditional avocational collector, and to preserve the traditions and dignity of avocational collecting for scientific purposes as a worthy and honorable pursuit.

Council of Directors

Council Chairman: Rosser W. Garrison, Azusa, CA, USA; — Vice Chairman: J. Benjamin Ziegler, Summit, NJ, USA; — Councilmen: Ulf Eitschberger, Marktleuthen, Germany; Jack L. Harry, Salt Lake City, UT, USA; William Mauffray, Gainesville, FL, USA; Todd L. Stout, Bountiful, UT, USA; — Executive Director: Carl Cook, Center, KY, USA.

Publications and Meetings

On matters of immediate importance and urgency direct mail memos will be forwarded to the membership. The establishment of our own journal is planned as soon as possible. Seminars will be held annually beginning in 1994; preferably they can be held as a specialized working group in connection with meetings of other organizations similarly oriented toward ISCA's objectives.

Why should you be a member of ISCA?

Are you aware it is a violation of federal regulations to pick up a migratory bird's molted feather from US public land? To pick up certain seashells on public beaches in some countries? To collect insects in some countries, or to import natural history specimens from them, without first purchasing a permit that in some instances costs \$ 700.00? Do you know it is a violation of some country's laws for anyone except their own citizens to publish scientific papers about their coun-

try's fauna and flora? Did you know you cannot legally remove a dead insect from your auto's grill and add it to your collection in at least one country we know about? As incredulous as it may seem, regulations such as these are being enforced and people are receiving heavy fines and being sent to jail for violations!! ISCA intends to make the public aware of how taxpayer money is being spent to enforce such frivolous laws, and begin initiating efforts for reform of regulations deemed seriously counterproductive to scientific research. We will continue to act as a clearing-house to provide information on domestic and international regulations as they apply to scientific usage of natural history material.

Services that ISCA offers its members include: (1) Continuously updated information on the rapidly expanding complexity of restrictions applied to collecting by many countries, and information about permit requirements. As the bureaucratic process encroaches more and more into the scientific research field, it becomes evermore difficult to keep ahead of the "paper chase". ISCA memos are your single best source of information to keep abreast of current regulations; — (2) Notification of impending legislative actions which may impact on collecting, or the use of natural history specimens for scientific purpose; — (3) Group representation by ISCA at the legislative level, on the viewpoint of our membership regarding new actions and reform proposals affecting our fields of interest; — (4) An information sheet providing free listing for wants and exchanges of material for scientific purposes from both individuals and institutions; — (5) Personalized guidance on making donations of scientific material to institutions, the procedures for applying for IRS tax credits for donating scientific material, and rosters of institutions interested in receiving donated natural history collections.

Cooperative Efforts

ISCA will actively seek to cooperatively address issues of common concern with all other like-minded associations. In particular we look forward to working toward common goals with the two already existing organizations devoted to representing the interests of scientific collecting: *The Association of Systematics Collections* and

Entomology Collections Network.

Information on Membership

Enquiries and applications for membership should be directed to the Executive Director, Carl

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