Collection development

The extensive natural history collections of the research institute Museum für Naturkunde Berlin form the essential basis of our own research programs into the natural sciences. The Museum also performs scientific studies and teaching programs that concern optimal preservation, handling, and accessibility for the future.

The collections of natural history specimens and samples in the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin are a central basis and prerequisite for research, not only for the museum?s own scientists, but for many colleagues from all over the world. The collections also house important reference material and accumulated knowledge from current and past research projects. Accordingly, long-term preservation of the objects themselves, and of their documentation (labels with locality and collector's information, diary notes, literature references, etc.), has to be assured.

Questions concerning this field dealt with under the motto Collection Development are:

- How are natural history collections, with their variety of physical demands, best preserved in the long run?
- How can these collections best be accessed and used effectively?

Beyond these approaches, museum scientists also deal with further contextual properties concerning the "collection item" within a framework of interdisciplinary research. What is the object philosophically? What is the specimen's contribution to understanding historical processes and the formation of scientific theories? What is the value of natural history collections for art and culture? How are collections perceived and understood by the public?

All of these specifically object-focused questions are summed up in the research area Collection Development. Via the historical and theoretical questions, it is intimately connected to the research area Communication in Science and History of Knowledge.