

The Mollusc Collection

Canadian Museum of Nature

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The Canadian Museum of Nature (formerly known as the National Museum of Natural Sciences, Canada) originates from the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC, 1842). Over time, its collections had spread over a total of 8 buildings in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. In 1990, the National Museum of Natural Sciences was renamed the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN), with a new research and collections facility opening in Gatineau, Quebec, in 1997. The Natural Heritage Campus houses the national collections of fossils, plants, minerals and animals, all under one roof.



Dry Mollusc Collection

CMN Collections:

3.8 million lots
14.6 million specimens

- Invertebrate Collections: **>1,928,960 lots**
>7,118,870 specimens
- Zooplankton assemblages: **>11,241,940 specimens**
 (mostly unsorted)

CMN Profile:

- Canadian Crown Corporation: Since 1990
- Annual Budget: \$34.4 M CND
- Government appropriation: 77%
- Total number of museum staff: 135
- Research & Collections Staff: 38
- R&C Volunteers: 88

Salary Ranges (Canadian dollars) *:

- Collection Technician: \$42.7K - \$66.2K
- Assistant Collection Manager: \$58.5K - \$74.5K
- Collection Manager: \$66.1K - \$84.3K
- Curator: \$74.7K - \$107.5K
- Research Scientist: \$70.8K - \$129.7K

* before taxes; plus benefits.



Example of a sample from an historic collection (Hubert Chabrier, 1789-1883)

Mollusc Collection

The CMN's Mollusc Collection is the largest, most comprehensive collection of molluscs in Canada.

- **Previous Mollusc Curator:** Arthur H. Clarke (1959-1977);
- **Current Malacologist:** André L. Martel (1991-present);
- Estimated **1.73 million** mollusc specimens in some **173,060 lots**;
- Divided into dry shell collection, wet collection and cephalopod collection;
- First catalogued mollusc specimens collected by GSC 150 years ago;
- More than **350 families** represented, collected in over 12 countries (with main emphasis on Canada, then US) and numerous oceans;
- Total number of species unknown;
- **56 primary types**;
- **88 secondary types**.

Strengths:

- Strong Canadian Arctic representation, with the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18;
- North American Unionids;
- Freshwater and terrestrial gastropods.

State of Curation:

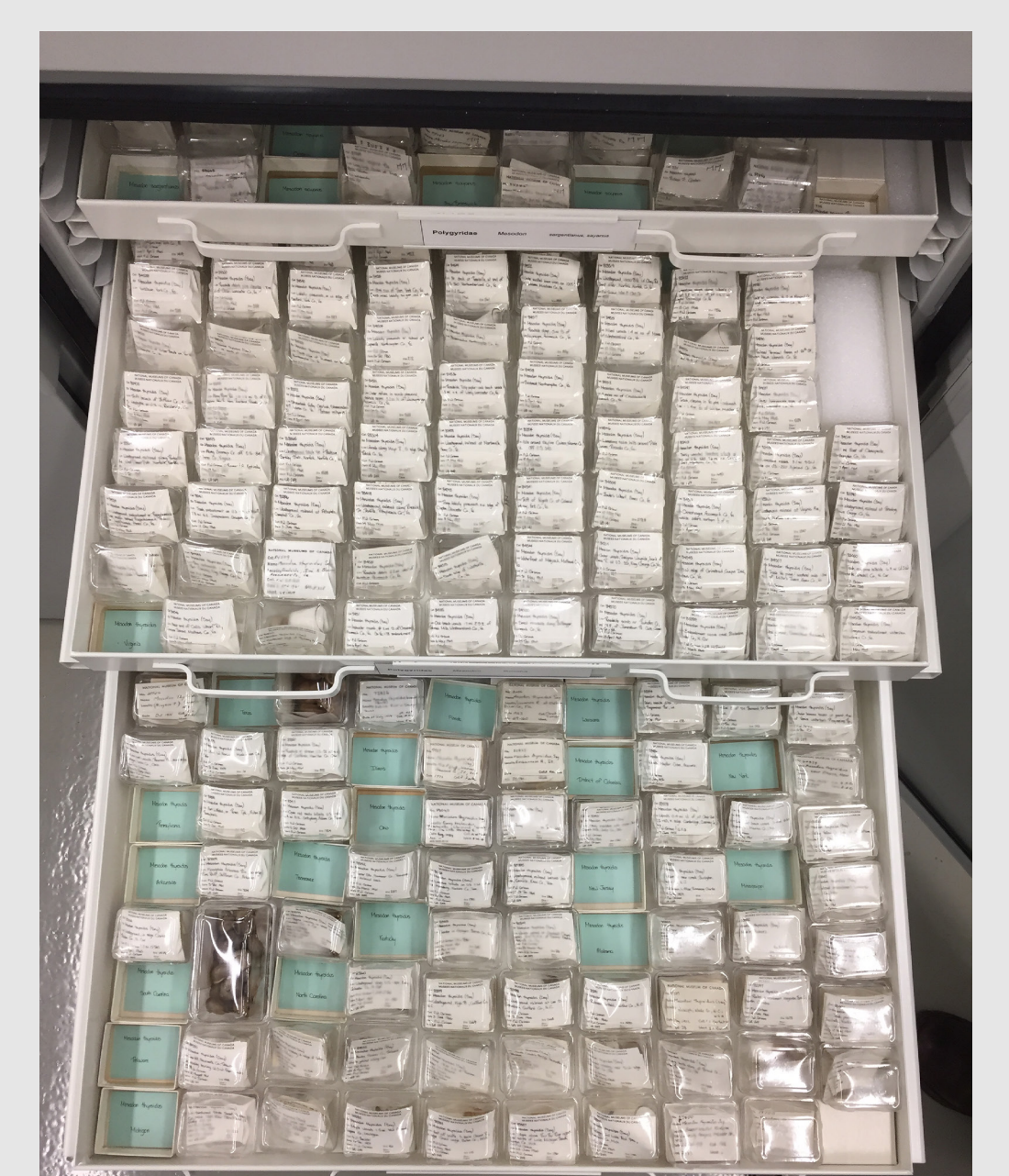
- Fluid-preserved lots in glass jars with PP lids with PE F217 liner and sealing tape;
- Dry shell lots in acid-free, lidded PET boxes;
- Number of electronic records: **42,683 (~25%)**;
- About **30,000 georeferenced records**;
- Digitization completed for Canadian freshwater and terrestrial molluscs;
- Little or no digitization of marine and non-Canadian material;
- Electronic records available on GBIF;
- **Estimated number of US lots: 10 000 freshwater & terrestrial molluscs.**

Current Activities:

- Shifting taxonomic groups within and between cabinets to make space for new acquisitions;
- Updating drawer and cabinet labels;
- Processing Arctic material for digitization.

Future Outlook:

- Complete digitization of systematic collection;
- Processing/digitizing Canadian and US backlog.



Unidentified terrestrial molluscs from the United States collected by F. Wayne Grimm & Françoise Dehenne.

Example of collection drawers with *Mesodon thyroidus* collected in the United States.

- About 120 000 dry shell lots arranged systematically and stored in modular archival PET lidded containers;
- Another 30 000 lots are in glass jars, preserved in 70% ethanol;
- > 20 000 in the backlog.



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