

The UBC Fish Collection under the Beaty Biodiversity Museum: Status, challenges, and perspectives

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The UBC Fish Collection was started in the early 20th century, catalogued after 1945, and completely computerized in 1977. Managed successively under different UBC units, it is now hosted by the UBC Beaty Biodiversity Museum created in 2010. Over one year, a complete inventory was performed in preparation for storage capacity extension, and the database conversion into Specify7.

The database lists about 35,000 lots, 350,000 specimens, 3,500 species, including 11 holotypes and some 200 paratypes for 40 species. The main country origins are Canada, mainly British Columbia, 45% of lots; USA, mainly Alaska, 27%; Mexico, 11%; and Panama, 3%. Fifty-five more countries account for less than 2% each. Marine species are more represented (63%) and dominated by common and important diadromous species from British Columbia (e.g., Salmonidae, Cottidae).

Inventories remain challenging when specimens of the same species, even lots, are spread across various sub-units (types, teaching, museum displays, skeletons, etc.). Also, reporting precise statistics should be standardized for global aggregators (e.g., GBIF, OBIS, FishNet). For example: counts may include all specimens once in the collection or only current holdings; some lots are split across several jars; counts in jars with dozens of small specimens are only estimated.

Since the 1980s, the collection was enriched from projects, rather than from regular surveys, and from a few expeditions. What should be the strategy of acquisition in the future? Focusing on British Columbia and Northeast Pacific? Launching or participating in overseas expeditions? This poster will give the opportunity to gather advice from colleagues.