

Find the mystery specimens



Canada was ruled by the British during the times of empire. **This land mammal, which spends much of its time in water**, was hunted nearly to extinction for its fur, used to make top hats.



The countries of the British Empire made a powerful trade network, which is why so many animals are in this room. Studying **this invertebrate, which could damage wooden ships**, was important for keeping this trade network afloat.

Strict rules now protect many animals, including how animals get into museums. **This bird, which is usually used for food**, died of old age in 2018.



This land mammal was valued for its **tusks** and labour during times of empire. It was also such a **large** and impressive animal it was shown off in museums back in Britain to show the power of the empire.

North America

Europe

Asia

Africa

South America

Australasia



This large land mammal spends some of its time in water. It was sent to Robert Grant to help him teach in 1829. Like most of the animals in this room, it was sent by the British people ruling over the local people in the empire, to show their support for this new university in London.



This land-mammal, sometimes feared by humans was hunted by local emperors. When the British took power from them, they hunted them too, symbolising power over the emperors and also the local people.



This well-known land mammal is common in British museums because of the British rule of **Australia** during times of empire.



The British **brought this insect to New Zealand to pollinate crops**. Many species taken to countries of the empire had a disastrous effect on the local animals, as they competed better for food and habitats. Some local species went extinct.

Mystery Specimen Challenge

The challenge

Today **you** are a Zoology student here at UCL. Turn over this page, search for the features in the photographs and write the names of the animals underneath. You can use the clues to help you. Along the way, you'll learn the story of how all these animals came to be here in this room.



Zoologists like these students are good at identifying and grouping animals by their features. This helps them understand how different animals are related to each other.

'Hello! My name is Margaret and I'm a Zoology student here at UCL. This museum is my classroom - I study these animals, comparing their different features. We even spent eight weeks identifying a 'mystery specimen' using just one part of its body. I worked out this is part of a frog skeleton by identifying the sternum and shoulder blades. Try the mystery specimen challenge out for yourself!'



Note for parents and teachers:

Young people ask, How did our collections come to be here? The honest answer is that the story of our collection (on this page) is linked to our colonial history. This story is embedded in the clues, which are to be used with adult guidance. If you are uneasy discussing this, perhaps with very young children, use the **text highlighted in red**. This focusses on the animals' features.

The story of our collection

This map over the page shows where the animals you're searching for are from.

Professor Robert Grant, who the museum is named after, was the first Zoology professor anywhere in England. When he started teaching here in 1828, he decided he wanted to use real animals. They were collected from all round the world, but how did he get them?

In Victorian times, Britain took over the rule of many other countries. The countries were called 'colonies' by the British, and together they were called the 'British Empire'. Sadly, one of the reasons colonists killed animals was to put them in museums.

As you explore the clues, you'll find out more about each animal, and why it is here.

The Grant Museum would never collect animals in this way today. But now they are here, people can learn from them. Understanding the animals helps to protect them in the future. Some of the students who study the animals here are training to be vets for example.

When you visit other museums, see if you can work out how the collections got there. How do you think museums should act now and in the future?