

THE RECENT CEPHALOPODA IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF VICTORIA

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The collection of recent cephalopods in the National Museum of Victoria dates back to its founding director, Sir Frederick McCoy. In his famous work, "Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria" published during the period of 1878-1890, McCoy described and illustrated four species of cephalopods in detail:

Argonauta oryzata Meusch, 1787
(McCoy, 1881, p. 7-10, pl. 61-62).

Sepioteuthis australis Quoy & Gaimard, 1832
(McCoy, 1883, p. 27-28, pl. 76-77).

Ommastrephes gouldi McCoy, 1888, p.
255-257, pl. 169-170.

Sepia apama Gray, 1849
(McCoy, 1889, p. 325-327, pl. 188-190).

No serious attempt was made to acquire cephalopod specimens for the collection after McCoy, because of lack of staff interest in this group. Apart from the Port Phillip Survey conducted by the Museum in 1957-1963 when some benthic species were collected (McPherson, 1966), only occasional specimens collected by the staff or donated by the public were acquired. The recent interest in squid fisheries in Australia, the appointment of staff interested in cephalopod systematics, and the cooperation of various fisheries organizations have resulted in

a significant expansion of the cephalopod collections in the Museum since 1979.

The present holdings (as of January 1983) of the cephalopod collections in the National Museum of Victoria comprises some 2,500 lots with the total number of specimens in excess of 12,000. The taxa which are well represented in the collection are Sepiidae, Sepiolidae, Loliginidae, Enoploteuthidae, Ommastrephidae, Cranchiidae and Octopodidae. The geographical coverage is Australia-wide with emphasis on south eastern Australian waters from southern Queensland to Victoria, the Southern Ocean and the Northwest Shelf of Western Australia.

At present only one cephalopod type specimen exists in the National Museum of Victoria collection:

Ommastrephes gouldi McCoy, 1888:
255-257, pl. 169, 170; F5104, HOLOTYPE

Sections of the collection has been studied and reported upon by Bell, Burn, Chapman, Gabriel, Gatliff, Macpherson, McCoy and recently by Lu, Roper and Tait.

Editor's note: The "Bibliography" section of this article is incorporated with "Bibliography of Cephalopod Biology of the Australian-New Zealand Region". See Roper (1983), pages 23-27, this volume.