

# The Linnean Society's Zoological Collections

## A valuable resource for systematic zoology and conservation



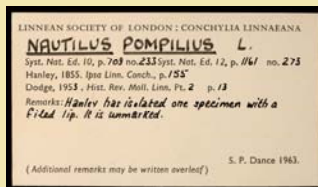
*Nautilus pompilius* Linnaeus, 1758  
(Pearly Nautilus).

### The Collections

The Linnean Society's zoological collections were acquired from Linnaeus' widow in 1784 by the founder of the Society, Sir James Edward Smith. They were purchased a year after Smith's death by the Linnean Society. Smith is known to have augmented Linnaeus' zoological collections with specimens of his own.

There is evidence that the collection at one time contained spirit-preserved material but all the extant specimens are preserved dry.

There are c. 3,054 shells and 168 fish with reliable Linnean provenance; there are also "supplementary" collections containing turtles, tortoises, corals, barnacles, crabs, brachiopods, sea urchins, starfish, sponges, bryozoans and foraminiferans.



*Nautilus pompilius* Linnean shell collection label by S. P. Dance.



Linnaeus' original description of *Nautilus pompilius* in *Syst. Nat* Ed. X : p. 709 (1758).



Illustration of *Nautilus pompilius* in: *Ricreazione dell'occhio e della mente nell'osservazione delle chioccioline: proposta a' curiosi delle opere della natura* [Recreation for the eye and for the mind through the observation of snails] by Filippo Buonnanni (1638-1725) : 168.

Cited by Linnaeus in his original description of this well-known species.



*Zeus faber* Linnaeus, 1758.

### How broad is the coverage?

All major worldwide groups of shells are represented, although the coverage reflects the stage of exploration that had been reached in the early 19th century.

The fish mostly fall into three distinct locality sets, comprising "Scandinavian" (actually some of these may have been sent to Linnaeus by Laurens Gronovius of Leiden), German (probably from Nathaael Leske) and Garden's American specimens.

### How are the collections arranged?

The fish are in the order laid out by Wheeler in his 1985 paper on the collection; the shells are arranged in taxonomic order and were numbered by Dance in the preparation of his 1967 report; the remaining groups are arranged systematically.

### How many collectors are represented?

Many donors were ex-students of Linnaeus. Dance lists 28 contemporaries who either gave or sent shells to Linnaeus or provided data which was used in the compilation of the *Systema*. Information compiled by Wheeler contains only three significant donor names.

**Carl Gustav Tessin** (Sweden) had a large collection of natural objects which was described by Linnaeus in 1753.

The most frequently mentioned donor of shells was **Erik Brander**, Swedish Consul at Algiers. He was sending specimens to Uppsala in 1756 and possibly before.

### How have the collections been documented?

Following on from earlier accounts of the Linnean collections, the shells were researched and reported upon by Peter Dance in 1967 (*Proc. Linn. Soc. Lond.* 178:1-24+10pls.).

Joan Ellis wrote on the isopod types in 1981 (*Bull. Br. Mus. nat. Hist. Zool.* 40(4):121-128).

Wyn Wheeler documented the fish collection in 1985 (*Zool. J. Linn. Soc.* 84:1-76).

Manuscript accounts of other groups exist.

**Fredrik Logie** was also sending shells from Algiers in mid-1760.

**Daniel Solander** sent British and other material to Linnaeus between 1758 and 1767 (but does not appear to have sent anything taken on the Cook voyages).



*Testudo* sp  
?*T. pusiilla*  
Linnaeus,  
1758



The collections are constantly referred to by researchers worldwide and many specimens have been cited/illustrated in taxonomic papers. Full references to all such citations are added to the specimen data.