

Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense (MZB), Indonesia

Between 10-18 September 1995 I visited the above museum. The following are my impressions which, I hope, will help other biologists who wish to access the collections. Please note that although I lived in the country for two years (1993-95), my Indonesian is very poor. Thus, there may have been some misconceptions due to the language barrier.

The MZB (often called the Bogor Zoology Museum in English) is the equivalent of the national natural history museum of Indonesia. It is located in the western part of Java in the city of Bogor. (Bogor is less than an hour by car from the capital city, Jakarta.) The museum is located in several buildings along the southern edge of the Kebun Raya (Botanical Garden) which in turn is in the center of the city. The museum was founded in 1894 and so has recently celebrated its first century.

The public part of the museum consists of static displays of preserved birds, mammals, other vertebrates, mollusks, insects and other invertebrates. Most of the vertebrates are in various kinds of habitat displays (usually old and not well lit). There are a few skeletons including a tiger, tapir and blue whale. The pinned insects and mollusk shells are displayed, respectively, in museum cases or wired onto boards. There are usually short explanations for most exhibits, some of which are also translated into English. They have a small shop that sells some museum publications.

The research part of the museum consists of several sections. The laboratories include Biosystematics (e.g. microbiology, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, mollusks, insects, other invertebrates), Ecology, and Physiology.

I examined the non-Acari arachnid collection which is presently housed with the other "pickled" collections (i.e. reptiles, amphibians and fish). The collection is housed in a building without air-conditioning. I believe that the arachnid collection is typical of many of the collections.

The arachnid collection is small as they have never had an arachnologist on staff. Large specimens are in wide-mouthed glass jars usually well covered with preservatives. Small specimens are in shell vials with cotton stoppers or in glass or plastic vials with plastic caps; all submerged in large jars. Many of the jars have metal lids which are rusting. The lids or the jars are usually covered with petroleum jelly. The jars are kept on metal shelving and are frequently washed and re-filled with preservative. The scorpion collection consists of about 75 jars, 5 with multiple collections. Total number of specimens was about 200, mostly of the large *Hormurus* genus. The pedipalpi collection consisted of 10 jars, 4 with multiple collections, and about 100 specimens. The opilionid collection consisted of 2 jars containing about 50 specimens. The spider collection consisted of 110 jars, 40 with multiple collections. There were more than 2000 specimens, about 20 tarantulas and 200 argiopids. The whole collection was basically sorted to Order. Collection labels were often brief and written in Dutch. Some only had reference numbers for which there were no code books.

Going through the arachnid collection was like taking a trip back through time. The earliest spider collections were made in the 1900s and the collections stopped by the late 1950s, about 10 years after independence. Most of the collectors were Dutch but several were former museum directors. The spiders consisted mostly of large or showy species such as *Nephilia*, *Argiope*, *Heterpoda* and *Gasteracantha*. According to an old catalogue, a Mr. Reimoser was the curator of the collection in the 1930s and seems to be the only one who tried to identify any of the material. The spider collection does contain specimens from the island of Krakatau some years after

the eruption as well as the famous Dutch-American expedition to central New Guinea in 1938-39. I saw no type or paratype specimens. I do not know where the collections are housed for the Wallace and other recent expeditions to Eastern Indonesia.

The present museum Director is Drs. Mohammed Amir, M.Sc. (personally interested in birds and termites). The collection manager for the pickled collection is Drs. Agus Tjakrahadiat (who I did not meet). The address for the MZB is: Jalan Juanda 9, P.O. Box 110, Bogor 16122, Indonesia. The telephone number is (62) (251) 322177; the fax: 325854.

Current policy does NOT allow borrowing of specimens. All work has to be done on site. This is unfortunate as the working facilities are not very suitable (they loaned me a low power microscope but lighting was not sufficient) for much work unless one brings one's own equipment. (Remember that the electricity is 220 V, very unstable and very intermittent. Also importing/exporting scientific equipment even as luggage can cause problems with the authorities. One needs to have a colleague inside the country to assist with the paper work and even then there can be many delays and problems. Faxes are much more reliable than the postal system.) The MZB publishes the periodical *Treubia* and has a library (not seen).

By 1997, the museum is supposed to have new quarters near Bogor with up-to-date biosystematics facilities. This is being done with developmental aid from various countries. Many of the curators have gotten/are getting masters and doctorate degrees in Australia, Canada, Japan, USA and various European countries.

The botanical gardens in which the MZB is presently located was established in 1817. It is world class but fairly static as there is little research being done now. There is a large extension to the gardens at Cibodas near the Pancak Pass in the mountains near-by. The grounds have more than 15,000 species; especially trees, shrubs and large herbs from all tropical regions. There is a botanical laboratory (Treub Laboratory), library (Bibliotheca Bogorensis), and various green/screen houses. There is also a guest house at Kebun Raya Bogor for visiting scientists. They have rooms for about 26 guests and are not usually full. The room I stayed in was large with two single beds, wardrobes, desk, coffee table, chairs, sink, and small portable fan. The toilets and baths were separate. There was a large dining room with a television set. All ceilings were about 5 metres; built about 100 years ago but in good repair. Breakfasts consisted of a boiled egg, toast, tea/coffee, mystery juice, and bananas; nutritious but boring after a few days. The cost was about \$US15 per night including breakfasts. Bookings have to be made by the MZB.

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