

## INSECTS

Butterflies, moths, dragonflies and beetles are well represented. Those displayed (moths and butterflies-608, beetles, dragonflies and other insects- 1104) form only a fraction of the collection.

## THE LIBRARY

There is a small library containing some valuable books viz. over 125 volumes of "the fauna of British India" series. It is also receiving periodicals from many countries. A reading room has just been set up.



## TAXIDERMY

Since its inception, this museum has maintained a small taxidermy unit manned by a trained taxidermist. Most of the small birds & animals displayed here are cured, stuffed and rendered ready for display in this unit.

## EDUCATION WITH A DIFFERENCE

The basement of the museum has been renovated in 2002. The floor now displays the stuffed birds against various distinctive land features of West Bengal.



*Bengal Natural History Museum is barely a few minutes walk from the Mall (Chowrasta) on the backside of the Gorkha Ranga Manch Bhawan. It remains open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on all days, except on National Holidays.*

## Bengal Natural History Museum

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# Bengal Natural History Museum





In 1903, then Lt. Governor of Bengal initiated the idea of starting a small museum at Darjeeling in order to provide the visitors to this hill station to have an opportunity to obtain information about birds and butterflies of the district. A suitable site was chosen in the Lloyd's Botanical Garden and a building was constructed at a cost of Rs 14,000.00.

At that time there was no intention that the collection should be such which would enable a student to study the fauna of the hills. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory and the present building was completed in 1915 at a cost of Rs 55,000.00. The Bengal Natural History Society was thus formed in 1923 for management of the museum.

Charles M. Inglis, an amateur ornithologist held the post of curator for 26 years from 1923 to 1948 and built up the museum with enthusiastic co-operation of E.O. Shebbeare, Conservator of Forests, Bengal. G.E. shaw, Superintendent of Cinchona Plantation and a host of officials and tea planters.

A journal of the Society first appeared as a quarterly in June, 1926 and continued upto 1976. As the funds available were not enough, the society was finally taken over by the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal in 1976.



#### BIRDS

The birds specimens now number around 822 belonging to 405 species and subspecies of the area including two foreign species received as gift.

Those not represented are extremely rare or local. For want of space it is possible to display a few species only in cabinets. The collection of birds' eggs (110 species) is also large and suffer the same handicap. The collection of birds' nests is small but very attractive.



#### MAMMALS

Out of 80-90 species found in the area 67 are displayed and are well represented, including many from other parts of India. Prized collection are the rarer cats, the Panda and the Himalayan Flying squirrels, clouded leopard etc.

#### REPTILIES AND FISHES

35 different snake species out of 76 of the area are displayed in the museum. Other reptiles and amphibians are well represented. Of over 100 species of fishes 57 can be seen in the museum.