

The Invertebrate Newsletter

NBC collections

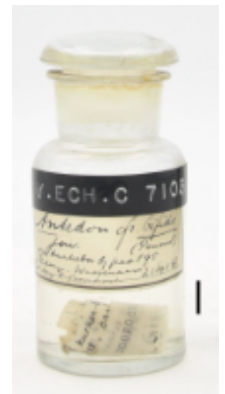
July 1st 2026 - Year 1(1)

[Cnidaria](#)

[Crustacea](#)
[Pycnogonida](#)

[Echinodermata](#)
[Other Invertebrates](#)

[Mollusca](#)



Dear reader,

Through this newsletter we attempt to update everyone interested about the developments and news on the Naturalis Biodiversity Center Invertebrate collections. The collections are extensive, but the work is nothing less. The work is done, by you, the volunteers, the researchers, and all other internal and external users. It is our ambition to share information, to connect, to push science forward and showcase the world the beauty of our nature and the need of describing every single species. It is our interest to make sure that scientific research is possible with the use of collections. To safeguard a strong balance in the availability of collections for the use of science, and preservation of its scientific and historical value.

In this newsletter we like to include stories from visitors and voluntary staff, student projects and collection projects, but also highlights from publications and collection updates. Eventually showcase some collection statistics and all publications published in the first half of 2026 with the use of collections. I hope this information will be of interest to you and help to network and learn more about everything that is happening.

[Hannco Bakker](#)

Leaving of Arike Gill

Sadly, we have to start with some sad news. Arike Gill, collection manager for the Mollusca and Vermes collections left us this year. Temporarily we were understaffed, however we can welcome Veerle Langezaal as new collection manager starting from July!

On the 26th of May we, the guest staff and volunteers of Collection and Research that worked weekly with Arike, said goodbye to Arike Gill.

It took place on a warm day in Freddy's in Leiden, a great location to quench our thirst and reminisce together. Being the center of attention wasn't really her thing, but she couldn't escape it that day. We put her in the spotlight with gifts and personal speeches - which she well deserved. Arike was a wonderful, dedicated, and warm colleague who was always there for us. She looked for a solution to every problem, and usually managed to find one. We will certainly miss her knowledge, helpfulness, and friendly presence.

Now, a new challenge awaits her as a curator at the Museum of Education at Museon, where she will be responsible for the natural history collections. A wonderful

position in which she can fully utilize her knowledge, creativity, and artistic talent. We therefore wish her much success, satisfaction, and job satisfaction in this new position.

Gab Mulder



Figure 1. Arike Gill during her goodbye on May 26, photo Gab Mulder.

Planned maintenance

Throughout 2026 we have maintenance planned in the collection depots. These are the results of outdated air- and climate systems. They have not been replaced since the building of our tower, more than 20 years ago. Phase 1, replacing the central systems, was completed early 2026. Phase 2 will be ongoing until the end of November, it is the replacement of the systems floor by floor. The 10th (slide collections) 11th (dry marine invertebrates) and 12th (dry Molluscs) were completed by the time this newsletter was published.

We are one week ahead of schedule. The 1st floor (Pycnogonid and Vermes collections) is planned for July. The 18th (spirit collections of Crustaceans, Cnidarians and Molluscs) and 19th floor (spirit collections of Sponges, Echinoderms and smaller groups of invertebrates) are planned from mid September to mid October. The replacement of the systems results in a temporary closing of the collections. In addition to the specified floors, the collections are limited accessible until the end of November.

Publication highlights

We highlight those publications that mention new type material deposited in the NBC collections and highlight new type catalogues. You may find a full reference list of publications published with the use of NBC collections [here](#).

1. New data on *Discradisca* Stenzel, 1964 (Brachiopoda, Discinoidea) from South and South-East Asia: description of *D. borneensis* n. sp. from NW Borneo and taxonomic status of *D. semicornea* (Preston, 1908)
Dulai, A., Raven, J.G.M.

Abstract

Type material

Discradisca borneensis Dulai & Raven, 2026 • RMNH.BRA.923 • Holotype.
Discradisca borneensis Dulai & Raven, 2026 • RMNH.BRA.924–925 • Paratypes.

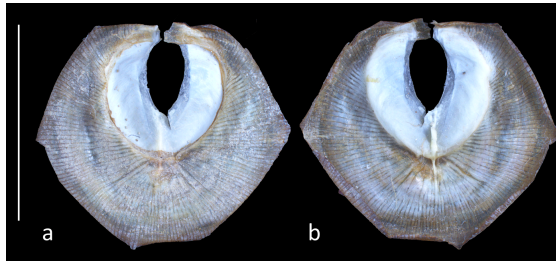


Figure 2. *Discradisca borneensis* Dulai & Raven, 2026, ventral valve of the holotype (RMNH.BRA.923). External and internal view. Adopted figure from Dulai & Raven, 2026.

2. Redescription of the type material of *Clavularia* de Blainville, 1830 (Anthozoa: Octocorallia), with descriptions of new taxa and a new family
Borghi, S. *et al.*

Abstract

Clavularia koellikeri (Dean, 1927) • ZMA.COEL.2683 • designated Lectotype.
Clavularia koellikeri (Dean, 1927) • ZMA.COEL.2687, ZMA.COEL.2688, ZMA.COEL.2693, ZMA.COEL.2694, ZMA.COEL.2695, ZMA.COEL.2699, ZMA.COEL.2702 • designated Paralectotypes.

3. On a new species of *Lysmata* Risso, 1826 (Decapoda, Caridea, Lysmatidae) from the tropical eastern Atlantic.
Fransen, C.H.J.M. & González, J.A.

Abstract

Lysmata wirtzi Fransen & González, 2026 • RMNH.CRUS.D.59490 • Holotype.
Lysmata wirtzi Fransen & González, 2026 • RMNH.CRUS.D.59491 • Paratypes.



Figure 3. *Lysmata wirtzi* spec. nov., ovigerous specimen, pochl. 3.9 mm, São Tomé, RMNH.CRUS.D.59490, photographed in plastic bag after collecting. Photo credit: Peter Wirtz.

4. A new species of *Palaemon* (Decapoda, Caridea, Palaemonidae) from the tropical eastern Atlantic.
Fransen, C.H.J.M. & Wirtz, P.

Abstract

Palaemon bijagoensis Fransen & Wirtz, 2026 • RMNH.CRUS.D.59520 • Holotype.
Palaemon bijagoensis Fransen & Wirtz, 2026 • RMNH.CRUS.D.59521 • Paratypes.
Palaemon bijagoensis Fransen & Wirtz, 2026 • RMNH.CRUS.D.59522 • Paratypes.
Palaemon bijagoensis Fransen & Wirtz, 2026 • RMNH.CRUS.D.59523 • Paratypes.

5. Clarification of the identity of the snapping shrimp *Alpheus lobidens* de Haan, 1849, revalidation of *A. crassimanus* Heller, 1862 and description of four new species from Japan previously confused with *A. lobidens* (Decapoda: Caridea: Alpheidae).
Komai, T., Fransen, C.H.J.M. *et al.*

Abstract

Alpheus lobidens De Haan, 1849 • RMNH.CRUS.D.5541 • Holotype redescribed.

6. Two new Scolodontidae from the Pantepui region in Venezuela (Gastropoda, Eupulmonata)
Roosen, M.T., Breure, A.S.H.

Abstract

Systrophiella tepui Roosen & Breure, 2026 • RMNH.MOLL.641171 • Holotype.
Systrophiella tepui Roosen & Breure, 2026 • RMNH.MOLL.641172 • Paratypes.

7. The stranger with no name: The non-indigenous murchisonellid from fresh and brackish water of northern Europe is a species new to science (Gastropoda: Murchisonellidae)
Bakker, P.A.J. *et al.*

Abstract

Koloonella peregrina Bakker *et al.* 2026 • RMNH.MOLL.653488 • Holotype.
Koloonella peregrina Bakker *et al.* 2026 • RMNH.MOLL.653483–653487 • Paratypes.

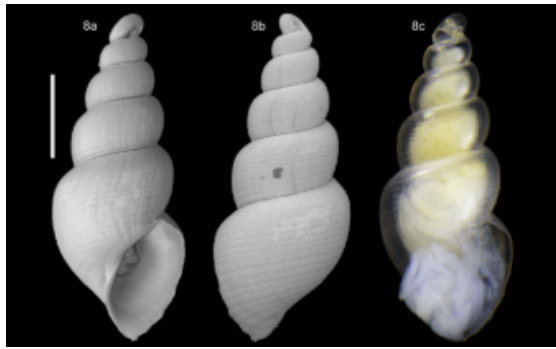


Figure 4. *Koloonea peregrina* spec. nov. Holotype RMNH.MOL.653488, South Steurgat, Brabantse Biesbosch, Netherlands. Adopted figure 8 from Bakker *et al.* 2026.

8. Cave-dwelling Homoscleromorpha (Porifera) from Cape Verde Archipelago (northeast Atlantic): one new genus of aspiculate Plakinidae and five new species.
Cabiocch, C. *et al.*

[Abstract](#)

Plakinastrella cachupa Cabiocch, Pérez & Ruiz, 2026 • ZMA.POR.7054 • Holotype.

Plakinastrella cachupa Cabiocch, Pérez & Ruiz, 2026 • ZMA.POR.7143 • Paratypes.

9. Unveiling cryptic diversity: two new species of *Dugesia* from northern China, including one sibling species (Platyhelminthes, Tricladida, Dugesiidae)
Su, Y.-F. *et al.*

[Abstract](#)

Dugesia cylindrica Chen & Dong, 2026 • RMNH.VER.22726.1–2 • Paratype.

Dugesia elongata Chen & Dong, 2026 • RMNH.VER.22730.1–2 • Paratype.

10. An integrative account of three new land flatworms from São Tomé Island, Gulf of Guinea, with the first molecular assessment of the phylogenetic position of the genus *Othelosoma* (Platyhelminthes, Geoplanidae).

Waart, S. de, Sluys, R., Thielicke, M.

[Abstract](#)

Othelosoma laterimaculatum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21321.1 • Holotype.

Othelosoma laterimaculatum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21319.1 • Paratype.

Othelosoma laterimaculatum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21324.1 • Paratype.

Othelosoma asymmetricum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21124.3 • Holotype.

Othelosoma asymmetricum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21124.1 • Paratype.

Othelosoma asymmetricum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21124.2 • Paratype.

Othelosoma asymmetricum de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21124.4 • Paratype.

Othelosoma dorsalis de Waart & Sluys, 2026 • RMNH.VER.21138.1 • Holotype.



Figure 5. *Othelosoma laterimaculatum* de Waart & Sluys, 2026 from Sao Tomé en Príncipe, photo: S. de Waart.

11. Collections Unravalled: an annotated catalogue of Antipatharia (Cnidaria, Hexacorallia) type material in Naturalis Biodiversity Center.

Bakker, P.A.J. & Samimi-Namin, K.

[Abstract](#)

Type catalogue of the Antipatharia collection.

12. Collections unravelled: Loman's Pycnogonids.

Bakker, P.A.J. & Sabroux, R.

[Abstract](#)

Type catalogue of Pycnogonida described by J.C.C. Loman.

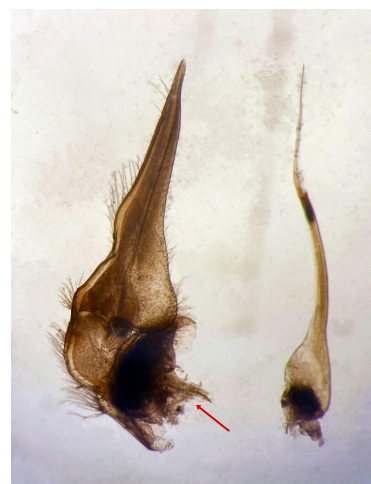


Figure 7. Gonopods of *Parathelphusa ceophallus* Ng, 1993 (RMNH.CRUS.D.42418) with the red arrow indicating the tissue that was used for DNA barcoding.

Service

As a service to foreign colleagues, measurements, tissue samples and photographs of specimens in our crustacean collection were taken. Thomas von Rintelen from the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin is working on a molecular phylogeny of the freshwater crab genus *Parathelphusa*. Naturalis holds the holotype and only known specimen of the species *P. ceophallus* Ng, 1993 (RMNH.CRUS.D.42418) collected by Jan van Tol on Pulau Buton, SE Sulawesi, Indonesia. As our present policy is not to damage holotype specimens, some muscle tissue (red arrow) from the previously dissected gonopod was subsampled and sent to Berlin for sequencing.

Jiří Patoka from the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague and his team are studying the population variability of the enigmatic parastacid crayfish *Cherax papuanus* Holthuis, 1949, only known from Lake Kutubu in Papua New Guinea. Except for the holotype and allotype, which are in the British Museum of Natural History, all specimens known are in the Naturalis collection. Measurements and photographs of part of the material were taken to be incorporated in the manuscript.

[Charles Fransen](#)

Meet our colleagues

Crabby Maxie in action

I am Max Willems, guest researcher at Naturalis Biodiversity Center. My all time favourite animals are crabs, so every moment I am not working on my fish physiology PhD for the University of Mainz (Germany), I spend working in the Naturalis collection. I identify unidentified crabs and love to write about them. I'm a (self proclaimed) history nerd, and since someone once called me a "crab historian", I adopted the nickname, and live the life. I have been identifying crabs on the beach since I could walk. Not very well, mind you.. mostly sorted them by colour, but I think that can be excused, as I was about five years old at the time. Regarding the Naturalis collection, my goal is to identify all of the unidentified crabs in the collection, so that will last me until retirement age, likely. I am currently working on Xanthidae from Indonesia and I am also writing a book with colleagues on crabs of the North Sea. Feel free to reach out to me with any cool crabs (showing off, my help with identification, etc, etc..)!

[Max Willems](#)



Figure 6. Max Willems in the field, photo: Tim Herrebrugh.

Chasing the impossible

My name is Jara Westbeek, a PhD student here at Naturalis Biodiversity Center. I am a researcher who tends to chase the impossible: sampling zooplankton from several kilometers below the ocean surface, in places where sunlight never reaches. And if that is not enough, I decided that my research should take me from one extreme to another: from the Arctic to the tropics!

My research brings me to two completely different, yet fascinating, deep-sea environments: polymetallic nodule fields in the Clarion Clipperton Zone (Pacific Ocean) and hydrothermal vent systems at Mohns Ridge (the Arctic). They are biodiversity hotspot regions, but also a potential source of future economic value as both systems hold economically valuable minerals and metals. As part of the third Mining Impact consortium (MI3), I study deep-sea zooplankton above potential mining areas. These tiny, yet important, animals play a central role in

marine foodwebs and are highly sensitive to environmental changes and disturbances.

My whole life I have been fascinated by things that seem impossible. Which is slightly ironic, because I am not exactly the stereotypical fearless marine biologist. I get cold very easily, I am not the biggest fan of being in the water, and I definitely do not enjoy being touched by something I cannot see. However, I have turned that last part into an advantage during sampling: zooplankton cannot see me coming either! That way, I can deploy my multinet and sample per depth strata of the zooplankton communities, where at the surface I preserve them for genetic analysis on land.

I feel incredibly lucky to join research vessels and collect samples from some of the most remote parts of our planet. I love sharing the stories behind my research, from tiny zooplankton to life onboard a research vessel. So, if you are curious, have questions, or simply want to know what it is like to chase the impossible at sea, feel free to come find me!

Jara Westbeek



Figure 8. Jara Westbeek on the R/V Sonne studying deep-sea ecosystems..

Visitor stories

Naturalis – Leiden – May 2026 Back in the laboratory having coffee with old friends – and looking at bottles of specimens collected a century ago. I have lost count how many times I have been in the collections of the “Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie”. My links with Leiden are deep – some 40 years - it was the home of my old mentor Lipke Holthuis, whom I learnt so much from And whose successor, Charles Fransen, became a good friend, and has recently also retired. Time flies. I am a dinosaur as well.

In Leiden again, I do what I have done for decades – looking at specimens studied by the old masters. Comparing them with my material, making drawings, photographs and checking characters. This time, I have focused on semiterrestrial crabs of the genus *Geosesarma* reported by J.G. De Man. Hannco Bakker managed to help me find some missing type specimens I could not locate or did not realise were in the museum. They were not available years back when I visited. One of them appears to have been missing since 1937! So I was delighted when Hannco walked by with the bottle in hand! But this is normal with all large and old museums - as they sort and clean up the shelves, misplaced and returned

specimens are found. Some properly labelled, some mixed. And always exciting when found. And they then enable taxonomists like me to solve problems. This visit was most fruitful – I could now finish my revision of these crabs from Sumatra. The last pieces of the jigsaw are in place. I even found a new species from Pulau Berhala which De Man had identified in 1929 as something else. And its closest relative was a species I named in 1995 from another part of Sumatra – whose paratypes I had donated to Holthuis – and now are also on the shelves in RMNH. Karma.

Every one of my visits to Leiden have been productive. The types and specimens in the RMNH are of immense importance for any scholar of Southeast Asian biodiversity. I have been asked many times – how does working in the new Naturalis compare to the old Raamsteeg facility? I miss the smell and ambience of the old building, I really miss my coffee sessions with Lipke and all the old staff in the museum. Many, like Lipke, are no longer with us. I feel nostalgic and sad. The new Naturalis is a far cry from the old building – its facilities are modern, comfortable and spacious – easy to work in. And all the new tools are on hand. It is not as “homely” – it smells different – feels more formal with more rules to follow. Like everywhere else – home included! One thing though in Leiden has not changed – the kindness, helpfulness and support of the museum staff – to help researchers get their job done and advance the cause of biodiversity science. The staff make you feel welcomed and they understand why you are doing what you are doing. The more things change, the more they remain the same. I am relieved.

Charles and I visited Lipke at his final resting place to pay our respects – a short walk from the museum ... It is a hallowed place for us. We remember the old days and good times. And there is still much work to do. I shall return – to solve more problems, have beers with Charles, Bert and Hannco, and more conversations with Lipke. A few more times at least before the game ends!

Peter Ng



Figure 9. Traditional visit to the grave of Lipke Bijdeley Holthuis in Leiden. Left to right, Peter Ng and Charles Fransen.

Exploring the Solenogastres Collection at NBC

During a recent visit to Naturalis Biodiversity Center, I examined the Solenogastres collection as part of my Marie Skłodowska-Curie project ExploDES: Exploration of the Diversity of European Solenogastres (Mollusca, Aplacophora) (funded by the European Union under Horizon EU research and innovation program). By integrating museum collections, new sampling, and molecular data, the project aims to address gaps in species identification that are crucial for biodiversity research and conservation. The material I found in the Naturalis collection was remarkably interesting. In addition, I had the privilege of studying sections from the Siboga Expedition and historical material from the Nierstrasz collection. My sincere thanks to Arike Gill and the Naturalis team. I hope to return soon!

Carmen Cobo

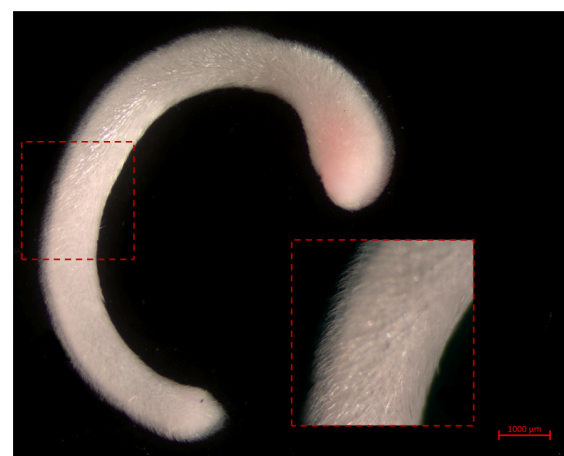


Figure 10. One of the solenogasters examined and photographed during the visit (RMNH.MOL.116437). The body is shown in lateral view. The magnified area illustrates the dense covering of mantle sclerites.

Plastic-fouling Serpulids

During my short visit to Naturalis, I had the opportunity to study the taxonomy of Serpulidae under the valuable guidance of Dr. Harry ten Hove. Using Naturalis infrastructure and collections, I was able to compare deposited material with samples collected as part of my PhD, which focuses on plastic fouling communities. The work conducted during this stay will be included in a systematic review of plastic-fouling Serpulidae. Though my stay was short, I had a unique chance to get to know the collection managers and researchers, as well as the high-quality facilities of the institute. I would like to thank Harry ten Hove, Katja Peijnenburg, and Arike Gill, who made my stay possible and fruitful.

Gabriel Sonoda

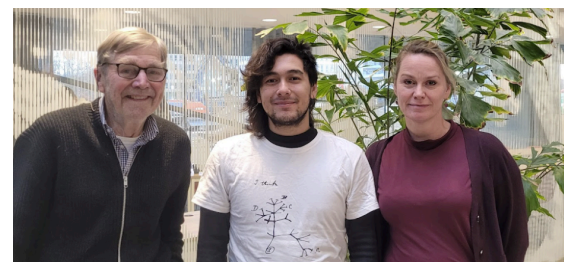


Figure 11. Left to right: Harry ten Hove, Gabriel Sonoda and Katja Peijnenburg.

Project highlights

Siboga Expedition Project

Throughout all collections a larger overarching project towards the Siboga Expedition (1899-1900) has started. This project will aim at 1) inventarising all published records in Siboga Monographs, 2) link collection objects to these records, and 3) create an inventory of datagaps. As a larger overarching project it will also work towards other results.

The Siboga Expedition is, likely, the largest Marine Expedition and one that is of major importance for taxonomical research. Hundreds, if not thousands, of species are described based on this expedition. The Siboga Expedition set sail to a large number of locations in Indonesia, but also areas now belonging to the Philippines and East-Timor.

Together with volunteers and project employees all Siboga Monographs will be checked and collections will be searched for any record throughout 2026, starting in February 2026. It will result in updated records of the Siboga expedition, a long list of specimens linked to their descriptions and preferably an annotated type catalog.



Figure 12. The navy vessel turned into exploration ship Hr. Ms. Siboga.

Slide collections

44.6 million objects in the Naturalis collection: that requires a lot of maintenance. So much maintenance, in fact, that backlogs have built up over the decades. Fortunately, Naturalis now employs an entire team to clear those backlogs piece by piece. One of the tasks we are currently working on is taking a close look at the Naturalis slide collection (microscopic slides). Depot 10L contains over 3,500 slide boxes, mostly from entomology, but also from invertebrates. For example, we have a world-famous flatworm collection housed in 770 boxes, collected and assembled by flatworm expert Ronald Sluys.

We are currently focusing on improving the accessibility of the slides by registering the boxes and linking them to a shelf number, and by placing stickers on the outside indicating the order and family. We are also transferring slides that are in cardboard folders into standard slide boxes. Finally, we are checking the condition of the slides for glass breakage, discoloration, missing labels, and drying out. This gives us insight into the work required for a hopefully follow-up project!

Sytske de Waart

Collection statistics

Number of new acquisitions

Marine Invertebrates	7 specimens
Mollusca	approx. 7.677 specimens

Number of outstanding loans and specimens

Cnidaria	28 loans	approx. 1668 specimens
Crustacea	77 loans	approx. 2856 specimens
Echinodermata	1 loan	2 specimens
Mollusca	77 loans	approx. 4814 specimens
Porifera	12 loans	244 specimens
Pycnogonida	1 loan	50 specimens
Vermes	12 loans	102 specimens
Museum exhibitions	13 loans	302 specimens

Visitors

The number of visitors this year is very low due to the ongoing maintenance to the collection tower. Only visitors with a very limited number of specimens and goals are currently possible to support.

Cnidaria	1 visitor	7 visiting days
Crustacea	3 visitors	25 visiting days
Echinodermata	0 visitors	0 visiting days
Mollusca	2 visitor	16 visiting days
Porifera	1 visitor	2 visiting days
Pycnogonida	0 visitors	0 visiting days
Vermes	2 visitor	22 visiting days

Collection Projects

All	Fluid maintenance
	01/03/2022 – 31/01/2026
All	Air & Climate systems update
	12/01/2026 – 22/11/2026
All	Siboga Expedition
	01/02/2026 – 31/12/2026
Crustacea	Digitizing Dutch collections
	01/03/2026 – 30/08/2026
Mollusca & Vermes	Slide collection inventory and registry
	05/01/2026 – 01/05/2026

Contact

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 Mollusc Collections - [Bram van der Bijl](mailto:bram.vanderbijl@naturalis.nl) - bram.vanderbijl@naturalis.nl

Links

[Bioportal](#) - To access our online data portal
[Collection Services](#) - To find information on loans, visiting, and access of collections.
[GBIF NBC](#) - To access collections datasets