Natural history resources in Special Collections
Andrew MacGregor, May 2018
QG HCOL026 [www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/documents.guides/qghcol026.pdf]

The Wolfson Reading Room
Special Collections Centre
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E-mail: speclib@abdn.ac.uk
Website: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections

Introduction
Many individuals, families and organisations have deposited their papers with the University and as a result, it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material, not solely relating to the history and culture of the north-east of Scotland but of national and international importance. Special Collections are rich in holdings relating to fauna and flora and the natural sciences. Notable persons connected with the University are represented, such as Professor William MacGillivray and Professor Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards.

Please also note that this factsheet should be consulted in conjunction with the factsheets QG HCOL013: Agriculture and farming resources in Special Collections, QG HCOL039: University student lecture notes in Special Collections and QG HCOL040: University student resources in Special Collections.

Archive collections
University institutional papers
Department of Natural History: teaching lantern slides: late 19th century to early 20th century (MSU 1437).

Department of Zoology, Cultery Field Station: 1949 – 2001 (MSU 1454).

Department of Zoology, Cultery Field Station, rook research papers: 1960s – 1980s (MSU 1453).

Department of Zoology, Cultery Field Station, shelduck research papers: 1960s – 1980s (MSU 1250).


Also see the papers of Professor Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards and Professor George Mackenzie Dunnet.

Family and estates papers
There are many game books as part of estate collections. Notable items include:

- Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness, estate game books: 1879 – 1937 (MS 1160/14).

Organisations papers
Aberdeen Natural History Association: 1845 – 1851 (MS 544).


Cairngorm Club papers (specifically lantern slide collection): 1889 – 1990 (MS 3405).


Personal papers
Agassiz, Louis, natural historian: letter to Reverend Dr. John Fleming, Aberdeen: October 1840 (MS 2444).

Barnett, Dr. Euphemia, botanist: 1913 – 1969 (MS 2989).


Bourne, Dr William, ornithologist: 1950s – 2000s (MS 3876).

Brooke, G., fishing registers recording salmon catches on the rivers Spey and Dee, Speyside and Aberdeenshire: 1931 – 1959 (MS 3644).

Brunyer, Abel, gardener: 'Hortus regius Blesensis', an alphabetical catalogue drawn up of the plants in Gaston, Duc d'Orleans' Royal garden at Blois: c.1652 (MS 387).
Dunnet, Professor George Mackenzie, Regius Professor of Natural History: 1950 – 1991 (MS 3365 & MS 3541).


Garden, Elizabeth (Betty), ornithologist: field notebooks: 1953 – 1962 (MS 3916).

Geikie, Sir Archibald, geologist, essay on Hugh Miller: 1895 (MS 2449).

Hamilton, Daisy (Margaret Camilla), Skene House, Dunecht, Aberdeenshire: natural history journals: 1884 – 1918 (MS 3899).

Lauder, Sir Thomas Dick, ‘Remarks on the geology of the River Findhorn’: 1827 (MS 531).

MacGillivray, William, naturalist and Professor of Natural History: 1811 – 1840 (MS 1032 – MS 1033, MS 2158 and MS 2159).


Sim, George, naturalist: notebook on fish and annotated volume of Robert Gray’s ‘The Birds of the West of Scotland including the outer hebrides’: 1870s – 1905 (MS 3795).

Skene, David, physician and scholar, including papers reflecting his interest in botany, natural history, and mineralogy: 1750 – 1780 (MS 37, MS 38, MS 39, MS 40, MS 471 – MS 483, MS 501 and MS 540).

Trail, James William Helenus, Professor of Botany, including material relating to expedition to the Amazon: 1787-1920s (MS 668, MS 851 - MS 853, MS 863, MS 864 – MS 865, MS 866, MS 867 and MS 2988).

Turreff, Francis, minister, botanical and ornithological drawings: 1925 – 1932 (MS 2062 – MS 2064 and MS 2082 - MS 2083).

Walker, Dr David, arctic Flora specimens collected by Dr Walker, ship’s surgeon and naturalist on board the yacht Fox: 1857 – 1859 (MSU 1332/9).

Watson, Dr Adam, biologist and ecologist, papers: 1953 – 2011 (MS 3877).

Weatherley, Paul Egerton, Regius Professor of Botany: 1939 – 1981 (MS 3621).


Wynne-Edwards, Vero Copner, Professor of Natural History, appointment papers: 1945 – 1946 (MS 3796).

Wynne-Edwards, Vero Copner, Professor of Natural History: letters patent conferring title of Regius Professor: 1946 (MS 3465).

Oral history collections
University of Aberdeen Oral History Archive comprises nearly 200 interviews with individuals connected with the University (MS 3620) - of particular interest is the interview conducted with Professor Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards (MS 3620/1/38).

Printed collections
The Local Collection, accessible via the Wolfson Reading Room, contains relevant printed material such as those published by relevant University Departments and by organisations such as the North Sea Bird Club.

There are numerous other printed collections of, or containing material of, particular relevance, including significant works in the Special Books and Lib R Collections, such as a treasured volume of John James Audubon’s *The Birds of America*. Audubon’s collaborator was William MacGillivray, later to be Professor of Natural History at Marischal College. Other significant treasures include volumes by the naturalist John Gould, e.g., as *Birds of Australia* and *Birds of Asia*. There are also numerous association and annotated copies of works linked to MacGillivray, Wynne-Edwards and Sim.

There are also named collections of relevance, e.g. FL (Fixed Location) Collection: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/cld/15

For theses, please search the library catalogue: www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/search-catalogues/catalogues-60.php

Access
Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search online catalogues to identify individual items. www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/search-catalogues/catalogues-60.php

Further reading
For further reading please also see the studies of a number of manuscripts, printed books and collections in the journals Aberdeen University Library Bulletin, Aberdeen University Review and Northern Scotland.

A number of the above papers were highlighted in Beavan, Iain; Davidson, Peter and Stevenson, Jane *Library and archive collections of the University of Aberdeen: an introduction and description*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press with the University of Aberdeen, 2011)
Links

National Register of Archives
http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/

Collection Highlight – William MacGillivray
www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/william-macgillivray-285.php

Collection Highlight - Professor Vero Copnerwynne-Edwards, Arctic Expeditions
www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/collections/vc-wynneedwards-naturalist-464.php

Connecting Collections
www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/collections/connecting-collections-427.php

University Museum natural history collections
www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/collections/natural-history.php

North Sea Bird Club
www.abdn.ac.uk/nsbc/