



Natural History Museum

Thiruvananthapuram



HISTORY

Maharaja Swati Tirunal Rama Varma (1813-1846)

Swati Tirunal, the illustrious ruler and music composer conceived the idea of forming a **Natural History Museum in Thiruvananthapuram**



However, it was **Uthram Tirunal Marthanda Varma** (brother of Swati Tirunal) and the **British Resident General William Cullen** who formally established this institution. An archetype of a museum took its shape in the residence of **Mr. J A Broun**, the Director of Observatory in **1853**. The earliest specimens were the personal collections of rocks procured from different parts of Travancore by General Cullen. Four years later in **1857** the Museum was opened to the public.

A new building for the museum was designed by **Mr. Chisholm**, the renowned architect from UK, and started functioning in **1880**. He was the architect to the Government of Madras. The building was named after **Lord Napier**, the then Governor of Madras. The display included indigenous artifacts, crafts and archeological specimens.





Gradually, the Museum witnessed a steady growth in its diversity of collections. As recommended by the Museums of India Survey Committee, this Museum was broadly classified into Natural History Museum and Art Museum. The specimens of Natural History Museum were moved to a heritage building in Shanghumugham and its management was entrusted with the Travancore University. In 1956, with the formation of the State of Kerala, the Museums, the Zoos and the Botanical Gardens in different parts of Kerala were integrated.



The State government erected a new building for the Natural History Museum as a souvenir in connection with the centenary celebration of the Department in 1958. The then **Governor of Kerala**

Dr. B Ramakrishna Rao laid the foundation for this building on **22 January 1958** in the presence of the **Chief Minister E M S Namboodirippad**.

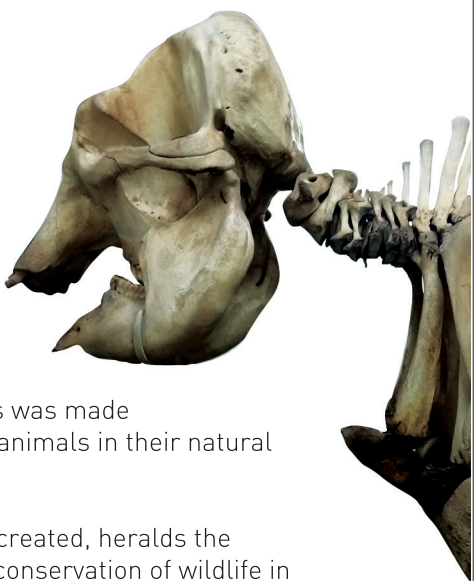
The Natural History Museum in this new building was inaugurated in **1964**.

Thiruvananthapuram Natural history Museum

A natural history museum is a scientific institution with natural history collections that include current and historical collections of animals, plants, fungi, ecosystems, geology, paleontology, and many more. The galleries share with the visitors, the amazing wonders of the natural world.



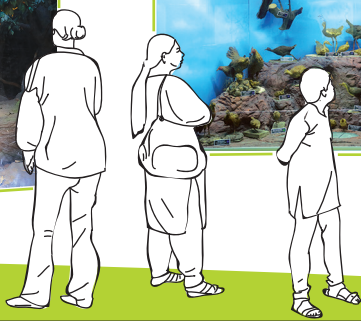
Established in **1964**, the Natural History Museum is known for its exhaustive collections and is one of the best of its kind in India. As part of modernization, improvement in the display of specimens was made and we see the wild animals in their natural habitat.



The panorama thus created, heralds the relevance of in-situ conservation of wildlife in their habitats. The vividness of specimens varies from microscopic organisms like protozoa to the largest living being on the earth namely the Whales. Spectators are ensured of an interesting and fascinating display.



The animal collection cabinets are not meant for entertaining the on lookers, but to urge the research scholars to explore further. The rich collection of avifauna make one spell bound and is sure to provide immense research in Ornithological studies. The specimens of birds were provided by none other than the Birdman of India **Dr. Salim Moizuddin Abdul Ali** popularly known as Salim Ali. These collections were made by **Dr. Salim Ali**, as part of his study on the Birds of Travancore attracts enthusiasts of Ornithology and Nature.



About Display

20 million years old petrified wood fossil welcomes the visitor. This fossilized tree trunk is a contribution made by the **National Fossil Park Thiruvakkara Tamil Nadu**.

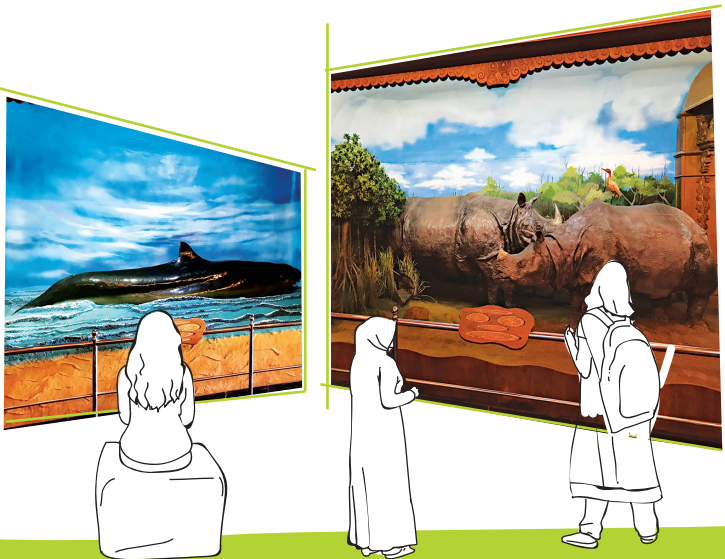
Ground Floor

Entrance

The traditional wood panel with intricate carvings greets each visitor as he steps in. Immediately, life size model of a toothed whale and the stuffed pair of rhinos in the backdrop of a Kaziranga model diorama arrest the viewers. These rhinos were once the star attractions of the zoo. The dexterity of the taxidermist makes us spell bound.

Skeleton Gallery

It is located adjacent to the Bird Gallery. Skeletons of fully grown elephant, Guar, Sambar Deer, Malayan Tapir, Indian Wild Ass, Ostrich, Emu etc. The giant bones of the lower jaw of the Indian Fin Whale are astonishing. Skeletons of man and apes provide an interesting comparative study which throws light on the evolution of man. Replica of a human skeleton in ivory used by the Maharaja Uthram Tirunal Marthanda Varma is of special interest.



Birds Gallery

The Birds Gallery is spacious with 15 large sized display cases. The rich collection includes birds of Kerala. The birds are classified in a systematic cum dioramic cases according to the families they belonged to. The first three cases have the perching birds like the finches, baya, tailor birds, sunbirds, munias, orioles, swallows, shrikes, larks, pitta and the common house crow. Hornbills the State Bird of Kerala is given a special status. Woodpeckers, hoopoes, barbets, terns, gulls, form habitat collections. The background set up is designed with expertise. Varieties of nightjars, swifts, and Kingfishers occupy another special case. The next pair of cases is adorned by the Owls, cuckoos, doves, and parakeets. Shore birds like snipes, oyster catchers, wood cock, sociable lap wing, Kentish Plover, gulls and terns occupy the next cases. Corner case houses the birds of prey namely eagles, kites, hawks, shikra and osprey. In the semi marshy habitat are seen grey jungle fowls, red spurs, fowls, floricans, moorhens, quails, bustards, crakes and rails.



Birds that visit our home garden are given special space. The jungle crows, herons, grebes, egrets, orioles and sunbirds come under this category. The waders and swimmers like frigates, boobies, pelicans, cormorants, darters herons, storks, ibises, spoonbills and bitterns are also given special space.



First Floor

World of Extinct Species Gallery of extinct species is an amazing world, takes the onlookers to the world of pre-historic beasts which roamed this planet's forests, oceans and plains. The display also include recent extinctions- an eye opener which necessitate the conservation of bio diversity and sustainable living practices. Valid information on the period of survival and the reasons for extinction of these animals is available in the touch screen kiosk.

Mammal's Gallery A rich collection of varied species from **India and continents of Africa and South America** are on the display here. Revamped and modernized habitat cases based on the zoo-geography make the displays more educative and appealing. They are varied life like habitats merged with the natural setup.

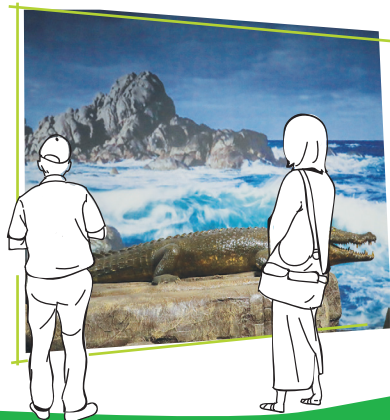
Ethnology Ethnicity provides cultural expressions and identification of a group of people. Here illustrative models of a matriarchal social set up in a Nairtharavad; different and colourful art forms; Kshatriya lady and Devadasi in their customary attire; miniature representations of costumes and jewelry of women of Indian states offer a real visual treat.

Gallery of assorted collections

Vertebrate Section

The World of Fish in the Fish gallery astounds the visitors. The aquatic creatures in the myriad forms and colours include both the cartilaginous and bony varieties. The cast of a Whale Shark, Sharks, Skates and rays; taxidermy collections of bony fishes triggers our curiosity. Wet preserved specimens of amphibians like salamanders, frogs and toads; and representatives of the reptiles namely lizards, snakes and tortoises too are on the display. Snakes both venomous and non venomous are housed in separate cases. There is a third category of mildly venomous snakes. Major

attraction is the plaster cast of a big estuarine crocodile and "terrifying gift" to the museum from the Maharaja of Kochi in the form of a real specimen caught from a canal near Thrupunithura in 1904.



Invertebrate Section

Animals without a backbone or bony skeleton come under this category. Specimens on the display are cast, dried

exoskeletons and glass models. Examples of microscopic protozoan like Encyritidium, Actinoma species are represented as magnified glass models. Porifera commonly referred as sponges are predominantly marines forms with incredible variety of colours and amazing shapes. Specimens of Euplectella, Gelliodes, Magalofastas are on display. Glass and hard skeletal structures of Coelenterates like Hydrozoans, Scyphozoans, and Anthozoans are included in the collection. Species of Madrepora, Physalia, Aurelia are the examples exhibited. The annelids represented by leeches and worms; species of Platy helminthes and certain parasites are really interesting. Representatives of Arthropods like crustaceans, archindas, insects; illustrative models of molluscs, specimens of sea hare and sea slug supplemented with anatomical data are noteworthy. Starfishes, sea urchins, brittle stars, sea lilies, and sea cucumbers categorised as Echinoderms which are spiny skinned forms with five part radial symmetry around a central disc are the wonders of the sea. Examples of these representatives with the illustrations of different phases of development of feather star grab attention.

Index Gallery

The very interesting and educative index collections have been arranged on the pattern of the British Museum of Natural History at South Kenisington.

The first case displays miniature model of pre-historic animals, a human form shown with each model for the relative size comparison. Duck billed Platypus, Armadillos and Indian Pangolin are some of the examples of rare and interesting animals that had been living in the Zoo are also exhibited. Modification of fur, skeletal parts of selected mammals are exhibited here. Also various aspects like – comprehensive study of skeleton, dentition, integument etc are given. The 14 feet skeleton of King Cobra is noteworthy

Geology & Economic Botany Gallery

The geological collections include rock and mineral specimens collected from parts of **Southern Kerala** and **Tamil Nadu**

Economic botany gallery collections include changing displays of indigenous plant related economic produces- like cash crops, medicinal plants, timber trees etc



H S Fergusons Repository

Collections for ornithological studies

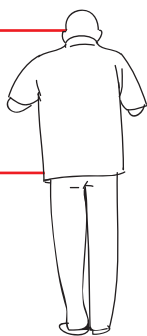
Natural History Museum. A repository of vast collection of preserved bird skins forms great resource for taxonomical studies. This collection stands next to **BNHS** and **ZSI** in India. It is the result of constant efforts taken by the British Ornithologists **William R Davidson**, **H S Ferguson**, **T F Bourdillon**, **John Stewart** and their Indian counterparts **Dr. Salim Ali** and **N G Pillai**. The best part of the collections is from Kerala. However gatherings from Sikkim, Kolkatta and Copah Malayan Peninsula have found their due space in the repository. A total of **2,225** cabinet collections are there in the repository. This repository is named after "**H.S Ferguson**" the first full time Director of Museums and Public gardens.

Catalogue Bird specimens are kept systematically in the Museum Repository enabling easy access to the researchers of avian fauna. The data of each specimen include formation on species, name of the collector, sex, morphometrics, and location. These catalogues and pictures of each specimen are made available in the computers set apart for this. Researchers are advised to make use of the computer facility initially. Access to the actual specimen is permitted only if it is absolutely necessary.

Herpetological specimens collected from Western Ghats are added to these collections.



INDIAN NATIONALS TICKET RATES



₹ 30



ADULTS

Above 12 Years

₹ 10



CHILD

Between 5 & 12 Years

₹ 50



FAMILY

Parents with
2 Children below 12 years

₹ 250



GROUP A

Higher Secondary School College Students
35 Students, 02 Teachers

₹ 150



GROUP B

Lower Primary, Upper Primary &
High School Students 35 Students, 02 Teachers

₹ 200



ADULTS (FOREIGN NATIONALS)

Above 12 Years

₹ 100



CHILD (FOREIGN NATIONALS)

Between 5 & 12 Years

TIMINGS



Opening time **10 am**
Wednesday **1 pm**

**CLOSING
TIME**



4.30 pm

HOLIDAYS



- ▶ All Mondays
- ▶ January 26 (Republic Day)
- ▶ August 15 (Independence day)
- ▶ Thiruvonam ▶ Mahanavami



0471 2316275

tvm.nhm@gmail.com

www.tnhm.in

Department of Museums and Zoos

Thiruvananthapuram-33 | Government of Kerala

