

MUSEO
DI
STORIA NATURALE

WELCOME TO THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF FERRARA

Deeply rooted in its territory and steeped in the history of the city, the Museum takes you to a charming journey through geology and zoology, paleontology and current environmental topics. Dating back to the second half of the Nineteenth century, it was originally related to the Mineralogy and Zoology course of the University of Ferrara. In the 1930s, the so called "Four-sided Area of Culture" was planned in the central area of via Palestro, via de Pisis and via Boldini, where the old complex of Sant'Anna was located, hosting the city hospital up to a few years before. With this new urban planning by Carlo Savonuzzi from Ferrara, the new seat of the Museum was built and it opened in 1937. But it only started to thrive after World War II, when new items were added to the rich collection of recovered and restored material from the Nineteenth century, and the institute officially opened to the public again. Since the 1990s the Museum has gained momentum, especially in the fields of scientific education and research.

THE WHOLE WORLD IN A MUSEUM

Dating back to the Nineteenth century, the rich heritage of the Natural History Museum of Ferrara was collected thanks to citizens' donations. In many cases, they were people from Ferrara who were living in other continents or had travelled for adventure around Africa, Asia and the Americas. In particular, you can see that the zoological collections encompass all the big zoogeographic regions delineating fauna distribution in the world, allowing you to see the huge variety of life forms living on our Planet. The big Polar Bear symbolizes the history of these collections. But the Museum also keeps and displays a lot of new specimens, whose number has grown a lot, especially in the past few decades. In particular, new specimens coming from different places were added to the collection of Birds, noteworthy for their appearance as well as their scientific and educational value. It is worth highlighting that today no animal is purposely killed for a scientific museum's collection.

JEWELS OF THE EARTH

What are minerals? You can look for an answer in this "hall" of minerals, an extended room where minerals and their properties are classified. Minerals are made up of one or more of over 100 chemical elements existing on Earth. There are over 4000 known mineral species, divided into 9 classes according to their chemical composition and crystal structure. Here you can see minerals for each of those classes; among them, a large sample of milky quartz from Madagascar weighing more than 15 kg stands out. You will be able to discover the numerous properties of minerals, such as fluorescence, magnetism and radioactivity, measured by the Geiger-Müller counter.

FOOTPRINTS OF LIFE

This section most closely resembles the set-up presented by then-director Mario Canella in 1952. Therefore, the paleontology room is a valuable historic evidence of the time when it was designed, and it features important collections such as the Conti collection, including hundreds of fossil molluscs coming from Pleistocene layers of Monte Mario in Rome. This section features some of the main groups of invertebrate fossils, with the well-known ammonites and brachiopod fossils. Other highlights are the fish collection coming from the famous fossil field of Bolca (Verona), dating back to about 50 million years ago, and the full-size model of a Plesiosaur's skeleton, a big marine predator who lived in the age of dinosaurs.

HER MAJESTY, THE CONDOR

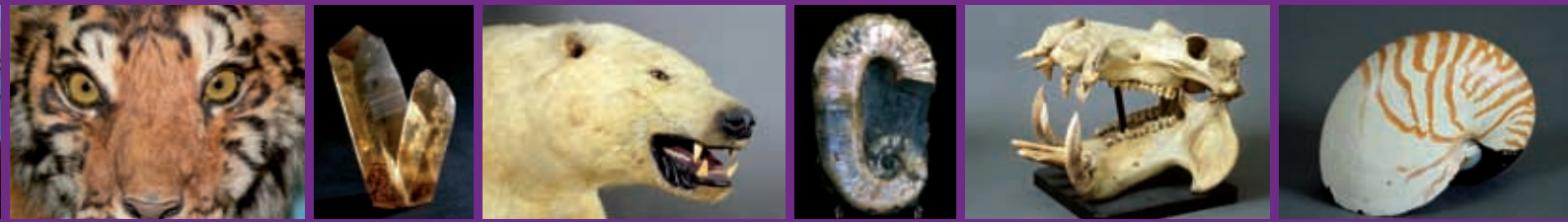
The first of the 3 zoology sections boasts 2 majestic Andean condors, prepared in the second half of the Nineteenth century. In this room you can also see many more Birds, Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, and follow the evolutionary process through which sea water Vertebrates colonised fresh water and dry land. Invertebrates are there as well, especially organisms with jointed legs like Arthropods, a large category including insects, spiders, and scorpions. Among them, Insects feature the highest number of species (more than 1 million).

OUR BIG FAMILY

This zoology section of the Museum is an excellent introduction to Mammals' natural history and evolution. The room boasts a giant anteater from South America, who has very strong nails used to destroy ant and termite nests, which it feeds on thanks to its long tongue. Another highlight is the skull of the very rare Franciscana or La Plata dolphin (pontoporia), who lives in the coastal Atlantic waters of South America. In Mammals, sometimes fetal development can be abnormal, as in the case of the two-headed calf who lived only a few days after birth. Part of this section includes Molluscs, a group of animals without vertebras who were able to adapt to, and colonise, a range of very different environments (sea, freshwater and dry land), diversifying in a high number of species.

A LIFE WITHOUT A SKELETON

The itinerary through the Museum ends in the last section, dedicated to organisms at both ends of the evolutionary process, from sponges to animals with vertebras. You can see sponges, jellyfish, corals, actinias, and worms of various evolutionary lineages, either free-living or parasites. This room closes the Vertebrates itinerary, as well as the travel in the world of Mammals. Among the most interesting specimens, you can see the cougar preying a monkey, and a beautiful dwarf leopard or ocelot. The baby tapir and elephant zangs are worth noticing, too. Among Primates you can see some very rare species, such as the guereza with its beautiful black fur and white fringes, and the golden lion tamarin. Other highlights are the skeletons of the big bat and the young chimpanzee, the latter remarkably resembling the human species in its anatomy.



The obvious reason is a strong nature-oriented policy focusing on biodiversity conservation, a basic rule for a modern Natural History Museum. New specimens are roadkills, animals subject to judicial attachment (poaching), and animals died in livestock and zoological gardens and parks.

LANDSCAPES OF THE EARTH

This is the most recent department of the Museum, it includes about one third of the Museum's exhibition itinerary, and it pays homage to Planet Earth and the huge variety of landscapes and life forms of the world we live in. "Landscapes of the Earth" deals with general environmental topics through

examples from the local territory and the Ferrara area. Along with many showcases with fauna, flora, fossil and rock specimens, the exhibition itinerary includes multimedia displays, models, and representations of environments. This section is divided into 3 parts: "Reading the Environment", "Traces of Time" and "Earth in Progress", each marked with a green, blue or orange upper band inside the showcases. The first 2 also feature full-size models of Apennines and Po Valley environments (dioramas), where you can see animals and plants. "Earth in Progress" displays the main Earth Science topics through rock samples, fossils and models, among which a notable representation of a rock sequence of the Alps, almost 4 metres high, used to understand the paleoenvironmental information that can be "read" in the rocks.



studio grafico SIMONA PASINI - 349.5402594



THE MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

A GUIDE TO THE MUSEUM



MUSEO CIVICO
DI STORIA NATURALE
DI FERRARA



via Filippo De' Pisis, 24
44121 FERRARA

Info: 0532.203381 – 0532.206297
<http://storianaturale.comune.fe.it>
e-mail: museo.storianaturale@comune.fe.it

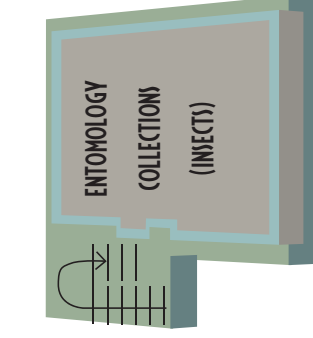


Opening times
From Tuesday to Sunday
09.00 – 18.00
Closed on Mondays
Tickets
Full price: 4€
Reduced price: 2€
Free entry for pupils and their teachers (upon reservation) and for visitors under 18
Public local buses from the train station, lines 1 and 9 (first stop Corso Giovecca)
Parkings available nearby

Follow us on 
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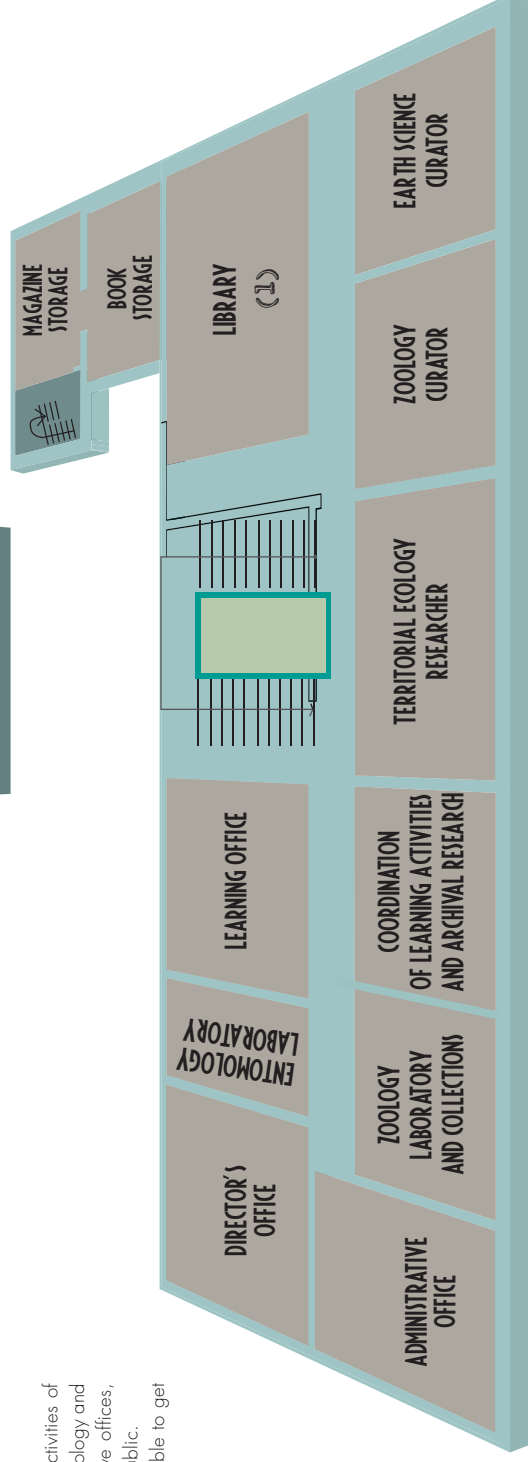
MUSEUM MAP



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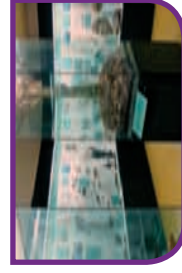
TURRET

The top floor is the heart of all the scientific, educational and administrative activities of the Museum. It is the workplace of the scientific staff, including earth science, ecology and zoology researchers and curators, and it hosts the director's and administrative offices, laboratories, and storage rooms for study collections not directly open to the public. The director, tutors, researchers and curators of the Museum are always available to get in touch with visitors through the exhibition attendants.



(1) The Library of the Museum is specialised in natural science, and hosts about 5000 volumes of earth science, botany, zoology, ecology and biology that can be consulted freely, and in some cases borrowed. In the library you can also consult about 200 specialised magazines in all fields of natural sciences.

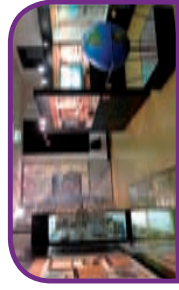
The library of the Museum is open to the public from Tuesday to Friday from 10.00 to 13.00, and on Mondays and Tuesdays also from 14.00 to 17.00.



(1) This section is dedicated to planet Earth, paying homage to the huge variety of landscapes and life form of the world we live in. It deals with environmental topics through examples from the Po Valley and Delta, the Apennines, and those events which – through geologic eras – led to the present variety of natural environments and living species



(2) "Earth in Progress" is the geological part of "Landscapes of the Earth", and it shows the main earth science topics through samples, models, and a number of pictures, drawings and charts. The models include a New York skyscraper to help our understanding of geologic time, a rock sequence – almost 4 metres high – to "read" some characteristics of rocks, and a model of the geothermal field of Casaglia, which produces heat for a part of the city.



(3) The Ecology Lab is the place where the scientific staff of the Museum has been carrying out researches on the Po Valley and Delta for some decades. Here, samples collected from study campaigns in different ecosystems are analysed and processed to be presented in scientific articles. Specimens and samples are stored and classified in specific rooms in the lab. Many university students complete their internship here before graduation, actively collaborating to the studies and aided by the scientific staff of the Museum.

Having a very high scientific value, these studies are shared with land management bodies, and they are an essential support for adequate environment and biodiversity policies.



(1) The big Polar Bear stands out in the centre of the room, symbolising the history of the Nineteenth century collections of the Natural History Museum of Ferrara. In this room you can see that the Museum's collections include all the big zoogeographic regions delineating fauna distribution in the world, allowing you to see the huge variety of life forms of our Planet.

The room also features a model skull of *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the original being kept at Natural History Museum of New York and dating back to upper Cretaceous of North America.



(7) This room features a showcase with multicellular organisms, all of which are invertebrates, who marked the first stage of animal colonisation on land: sponges, jelly fish, corals, actinias, and worms of various evolutionary lineages, either free-living or parasites. The other showcases close the Mammals itinerary. The showcase with primates features some very rare species, and includes the young chimpanzee's full skeleton.

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A LIFE WITHOUT A SKELETON ZOOLOGY (7)
OUR BIG FAMILY ZOOLOGY (8)

* MODEL OF DNA MOLECULE

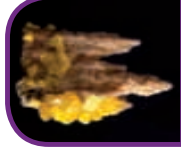


(8) The two majestic Andean condors stand out in this hall, partly dedicated to Birds. The other showcases display specimens and models of Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, Insects, and other Arthropods like spiders, scorpions and crustaceans.

HER MAJESTY, THE CONDOR ZOOLOGY (5)
JEWELS OF THE EARTH PALEONTOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY (4)
JEWELS OF THE EARTH MINERALOGY (3)

LANDSCAPES OF THE EARTH READING THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRACES OF TIME (1)
LANDSCAPES OF THE EARTH EARTH IN PROGRESS (2)

(4) Among the many fossils featured in this room, you can see *Eolates* sp., one of almost 300 species of fossil fish found in Pesciara di Bolca (Verona), one of the most important fossil fields in the world (lower Eocene, about 50 million years).



(3) In the "hall" of minerals, an extended room where minerals and their properties are classified, you can see many samples, among which sulfur crystals (S) or calcium carbonate stalactite (CaCO3) coming from Predappio (Forlì-Cesena).



(3) The Ecology Lab is the place where the scientific staff of the Museum has been carrying out researches on the Po Valley and Delta for some decades. Here, samples collected from study campaigns in different ecosystems are analysed and processed to be presented in scientific articles. Specimens and samples are stored and classified in specific rooms in the lab. Many university students complete their internship here before graduation, actively collaborating to the studies and aided by the scientific staff of the Museum.

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EARTH SCIENCE LABORATORY

EARTH SCIENCE COLLECTIONS



(2) It is the heart of educational activities in the Museum. Every year, thousands of students from all school classes participate in the different activities organized by the learning department, including workshops about the simulation of research techniques and how to handle samples and finds, interactive theme itineraries, and recreational-scientific activities, aimed at bringing young people closer to science. The Museum also organizes learning activities for families, such as birthday parties, animated itineraries, and workshops for adults and children, so that they can learn about the countless forms of nature while having fun.

* MEMORIAL PLAQUE for the inauguration of the Natural History Museum of Ferrara in 1937

ENTRY VIA DE PISS

EXIT VIA BOLDINI