



“Natural” History?

Some people probably imagine a great Victorian temple to fossils when they think of natural history. This year’s symposium aims to consider the role of print in establishing and spreading ideas about evolution, biodiversity, and climate change. In many ways, printing was a rather un-natural mode for disseminating complex ideas, particularly prior to affordable photographic reproductions and colour printing. But scientific pamphlets, academic journals and immense monographs all sought to spread knowledge of the wonders of the world.

So this year we invite papers about publications related to natural history, examining how those publications achieved their effects, how they exploited the print affordances available to them, and how we might expect to see natural history publications evolve in future.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Publications on different branches of the natural sciences: botany, geology, zoology, ornithology
- Studies of or by particular naturalists and authors
- Popular and best-selling natural history books, e.g., Dawkins on evolution
- Natural history education and popularisation: tourist guides, magazines, school texts, children’s books
- Guidebooks, field guides, encyclopaedia and other handbooks
- Colonisation, travel, translation, and cross-cultural knowledge of the natural world
- Māori, Pasifika and Indigenous natural history
- The role of print and catalogues relating to natural history collections and museums
- Book collecting and natural history, e.g., the New Naturalist series
- Digitisation and open access archives such as the Biodiversity Heritage Library
- Illustrations, images and maps in natural history books and print sources
- Books and climate change, conservation, the extinction crisis and other twenty-first century environmental issues
- The future of natural history publishing

The symposium will be held on Friday, 19 November 2021, with a public lecture on Thursday, 18 November by Nicole Kearney, Manager of the Biodiversity Heritage Library of Australia. This year's symposium will also feature a plenary talk by our very own Dr. Rosi Crane as part of the Friday sessions.

Please submit abstracts of 250–300 words to the Centre for the Book (books@otago.ac.nz) by 1 September. Feel free to contact either of the organisers, Shef Rogers (shef.rogers@otago.ac.nz) or Donald Kerr (donald.kerr@otago.ac.nz), if you have any questions. We aim to send out notifications about acceptances and a draft programme by mid-September.