

Lille, Musée d'Histoire Naturelle (Natural History Museum)

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The Lille Natural History Museum is classed as one of the most important provincial museums. Founded in 1816 by the Lille Society of Science, Agricultural and the Arts, it became council-owned in 1855 for educational purposes when the Lille Faculty of Science was set up. Initially located in rue des Fleurs, it gradually moved to its current site in the rue de Bruxelles. This move was in three stages. In 1902, the geology collection built up by Gosselet were installed in the gallery, followed by the Barrois collection in 1907. The present layout of the museum has been the same since 1911 when the natural history collections were installed there.

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Its collections

In spite of all the ups and downs it suffered during two world wars, the museum never stopped adding to its collections, through acquisitions, donations or attributions. It is now the holder of some extremely rich and varied collections. Its core collection of paleontological, mineralogical and zoological specimens was added to under a council order in 1991 by the collections of the Museum of Trade and Industry and in 1992 those of the Musée Moillet devoted to non-European ethnography, previously kept in the Palais des Beaux Arts. A complete renovation project is planned so that the entire collection can be exhibited.

The zoology collections contain over 110 000 specimens, including 1500 mammals, 15 000 regional and exotic birds, almost 1000 reptiles, batrachians and fish, 5000 mollusc shells, over 100 000 insects and arachnids, some of which are live exhibits. The specimens of naturalized species include around twenty that are now extinct: the Great Auk, the Tasmanian Tiger, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and the Passenger Pigeon, to name just a few.

The geology collection contains tens of thousands of paleontological specimens and minerals, some of which are unique. They illustrate the former landscapes of the Nord-Pas de Calais region, such as the coral seas that existed 400 million years ago and the carboniferous forests of 300 million years ago.

Opening times:

Mondays to Fridays: 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm

Sundays: 10am-5pm

Closed on Tuesdays and Saturdays

Admission:

Full price: € 3.50 / Concessions: € 2.50

Permanent collection only: Full price: € 3.50 / Concessions: € 2

Admission free: for the under 12s, jobseekers and people receiving benefits, and on the first Sunday in the month

Contact :

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Lille