

British bird eggs

If you are you thinking of donating a collection of bird eggs to RAMM:

Please DO:

- Read the guidance below
- Contact a curator

Please do NOT

- send RAMM bird eggs in the post.
- drop off eggs at the museum reception.
- come to RAMM with eggs unless you have an appointment with a curator.

RAMM will not accept any unexpected eggs. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, egg collections often contain pests (silverfish, beetles and moths) that can damage the museum's collections. Secondly, RAMM needs to be certain that any specimens arriving on the premises are not in breach of the law. RAMM is not a depository for unwanted birds eggs.

RAMM's collecting policy on British bird eggs

RAMM's oldest collection of bird eggs dates to the mid 1800s and belonged to Solomon Caesar Malan. The museum holds many other historic collections as well as modern specimens legally collected under licence. RAMM does not currently have a licence to keep eggs that were collected illegally and seized by the police. All potential acquisitions are considered on a case by case basis.

RAMM will only consider accepting a collection if it is of historic significance or has the potential for scientific research. It must have been collected legally:

- The eggs can be shown to be collected before 1981 – e.g. dates on the eggs, collector's notes, or associated with a particular person whose dates indicate their age.
- Eggs collected after 1981 must have been collected under licence. RAMM will require a copy of the licence.

- ▶ The eggs are predominantly from Devon or collected by one of RAMM's historic donors / a prominent Devon figure.
- ▶ Eggs should have data with them – ideally species, collection location at least to town level, collection date, a known collector

Current legislation in brief

The law protects all British wild bird species, their eggs and nests. It is illegal to possess a British wild bird egg collected after the Protection of Birds Act 1981 came in to force. If you have a collection you must be able to demonstrate that the collection was made before this date – e.g. a collector's note book.

It is illegal to sell British bird eggs not matter how old they are.

My eggs do not have data or the museum doesn't want them, what should I do?

If you can show the eggs were collected legally you can keep them or you could pass them to another organisation such a school or art group.

Further information

- ▶ RSPB – [Collecting bird Eggs](#)
- ▶ UK Government: [DEFRA](#)

