

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE ETNIER ICHTHYOLOGICAL COLLECTION

UTEIC Collection Staff

Knoxville, Tennessee

The University of Tennessee Etner Ichthyological Collection (UTEIC) was established in 1965, when Dr. David A. Etner started collecting fish specimens from throughout the state for teaching and research purposes. At the time, little was known about fish diversity in the region which made identification challenging. The need for a collection became apparent to Dr. Etner so he began acquiring specimens in various ways from various river systems. The UTEIC now maintains approximately 425,000 specimens of fish, a staggering number for a young collection, collected from nearly all 50 United States, Gulf of Mexico, Mexico, South

America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica, Russia, and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

With over 40,000 jars of specimens, it is the largest fish collection in the state of Tennessee and one of the most valuable in the southeastern U.S. It has become a highly celebrated, nationally renowned biological archive. In fact, many southeastern U.S. specimens in the collection have prompted the discovery of new species and have been used to study the effects of climate change and water quality on aquatic communities. Moreover, the UTEIC is considered the most comprehensive tool enabling researchers to identify and predict changes in where fishes live and the



Dave Etner (Ets) playing in *his* collection. (Photo by Konrad Schmidt)

size of their populations throughout Tennessee.

While UTEIC contains collections from all over the world, the bulk of its holdings come from east of the Rocky Mountains in North America, most notably from biological hotspots in the Southeastern region. Over the years, the UTEIC has served as critical a repository, possessing substantial inventories such as collections from regional monitoring surveys spanning more than 50 years provided by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Among these holdings is a significant representation of southeastern jeopardized species.

The Collection has also served as an invaluable resource for researchers, private agencies, and governmental organizations. Our loan program processes hundreds of outgoing fish each year and requests for available data are constant. Since its establishment, the collection and its associated information have contributed to the degrees of at least 45 Ph.D and M.S. students. Fish specimens utilized in more than one hundred publications embodying the research of Dr. David Etner and his students are vouchered in the UTEIC, including 269 lots (2,995 specimens) of designated paratypes. Moreover, The UTEIC is heavily utilized for teaching purposes, providing specimens for

classes in both ichthyology and vertebrate biology. Also, various collection projects provide a unique volunteer and learning opportunity for students.

Natural history collections such as the UTEIC are becoming increasingly important as researchers become more interested in how organisms relate to and interact with each other and to largely human-caused and relatively rapid changes in global environments. Now that the UTEIC has a vibrant on-line presence (<http://tennfish.bio.utk.edu/>), we know the collection will continue to expand its contribution to our understanding of the aquatic resources that we share. By contributing to the recently created Etnier Ichthyology Endowment, you can help ensure the continued viability of this incredibly valuable collection.

Several years ago, Dr. Etnier created the Etnier Ichthyology Collection Endowment. The endowment provides financial resources to help maintain and improve the collection. Currently, the endowment pays for the bulk of the supplies necessary for maintenance and collaboration efforts (alcohol, glassware, shipping materials and fees). However, the ultimate goal is to increase the endowment to the level necessary to support growth of our outreach programs, facilitate critical storage improvements and,

eventually, provide or supplement the salary of a curator for the collection. By contributing to Etnier Ichthyology Collection Endowment, you can help ensure the continued viability of this incredibly valuable collection.

For more information about the Collection and the Endowment, contact Jennifer Joice at 865-974-1948 or email her at jparris@utk.edu

ADDENDUM

NANFA Fellow Casper Cox attended an Etnier Collection Endowment event on December 14, 2017. More than 40 people gathered on the Knoxville campus for the fanfare, including many of Dave's colleagues and former students. Dave and Liz Etnier are personally contributing \$15,000 in matching funds to any contributions made in 2018. Chris Cox, director of development in the College of Arts and Sciences (and Casper's brother), hopes Dave's vision will be realized with this matching challenge toward a goal of \$100,000.

Please see the following link for more information about the event and how to donate to the UTEIC endowment:

<http://eeb.bio.utk.edu/etnier-ichthyology-endowment-established-to-support-research-improve-aquatic-biodiversity-in-tennessee/>

WHETHER YOU GOT SIDETRACKED BY MISSOURI FISHES OR SIMPLY PROCRASTINATED, 2017 NANFA CONVENTION SHIRTS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!



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