Searching in SeSam

Welcome to the easy to use search function of SeSam. Here are some hints to enable you to find your way:

Please remember always that the search result may not reflect all our holdings nor the whole information available, because specific information on persons (e. g. collectors) can be blocked due to privacy regulations. Also for protected organisms the whole information may not be presented. It is, therefore always advisable to contact the responsible curator in order to see whether more information is available. If you do not have the mail address of the curator at hand, please send a mail to info_Sesam@senckenberg.de. Your communication will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

Two possiblities are available "Quick Search" for simple queries using a limited number of fields and "Extended Search" for more complex ones in all available fields. In clicking on "search" you are automatically directed to the "quick search".

For both types of searching you have first to select the individual collection(s) by clicking with the mouse (left key) on one of them. If you want to add more collections use CRTL-left mouse key accordingly, the further collection (s) will be highlighted. There are no restrictions as to the number selected. If you want to search all the data just just leave all collections blank. Typically a taxonomic query will use one or a few collection(s). For a geographic query, e. g. searching for an individual country or province, the whole data set can be used. Please do notice that all Senckenberg-collections proper are marked with SMF. There are another set of non-SMF-collections that are hosted and managed by us and hich therefore have other codes. Most important are: SNSD = Senckenberg Dresden collection and ZMG = Zoological Museum of Göttingen University.

Another general trait is that you are asked to include or exclude historical objects (non actual identifications). You can also search only historical objects. If you exlude history you will only access the current taxonomic identification(s). If you are in search of types or an object that has been published under another name (or binomen) than the one currently used, you should include history.

Quick search

This is designed for quick access to a limited number of fields. No combinations other than the fields present in the search mask are allowed.

> ➢ Catalogue-Number: If you search for a given catalogue number in order to check the current identification and/or all the history of identifications you should enter the number into the first box. The second and third are used for more complex numbers as used in some of the collections. If the number consists of numerical and alphanumeric parts they are separately entered into the three boxes. Normally the first box will do.
> ➢ Genus: Self explanatory, enter genus name.
> ➢ Species: Self explanatory, enter species name. Search is also possible for species names without the necessity of referring to a genus. This may be helpful if you do not know the current genus but only the species.
> ➢ Geography: Enter either a continent (Africa; Antarctica, Asia; Australia, Oceania, Central and South America; Europe; North America) or a country (standard country name from ISO 3166: www.iso.ch/iso/en/prods-services/iso3166ma/02iso-3166-code-lists/list-en1.html) or a province (standard name of first level divisions from CIA-

factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html). A full hierarchical list of terms used can also be seen by clicking on "Localities/Dates" and subsequently either on "Continents" or "Oceans". The geography is arranged hierarchically using continent, country, subdivision (first level) and specific locality as levels so that e.g. Asia will include all Asian countries, and a country all political subdivisions.

➢ Chronostratigraphy: Standard terms at the levels Eon, Erathem, System, Series, Stage. For a hierarchical list of terms used click on "Hierarchies" under the heading "administration", select the chronostratigraphy card and browse the headings "Proterozoikum", "Archaikum" and "Phanerozoikum". There is no point searching for chronostratigraphic terms in the database if no paleontological collections are listed.

Extended search

The extended search allows searching in all fields of the database and combining queries. At first, select the collection (s) that you want to search as described above for the quick search, then the field types that you want to search by ticking the boxes next to the subjects. You can, of course, tick all of them, but usually only a few types are used. Depending on your selection you will have a list of fields in the field "Field". Select a field, set a relation and type the criterion. Clicking OK will enter the query into the search list. Continue the same way for other criteria. If you subsequently enter different criteria for the same field and get two lines for the same field in the search list, these two queries are connected by the operator "or" otherwise (between different fields) the connection is "and". You can remove any item from the search list by clicking on the exclamation mark behind that line. After the search list is complete, i.e. after you have defined your search term, click on "start search". To clear the search click on "reset".

Please note that you cannot type into some kinds of fields. This especially applies to the systematics or to persons, but also to a number of geographic fields. In such cases an assistant window will open automatically. In some of those you can select items from a predefined list. In others you have search for terms to make sure that you pick the correct spelling.

➢ Systematic terms (Biosystematik): The assistant allows searching for terms at all categories and hierarchies. Enter at least one letter (with which the word begins) and click "start search". You can restrict you search to genera or species, respectively or leave it general. The result will be a list from which you can select the desired taxon. If you click on the taxon it will be entered into the search mask field. If you want to search for more than one taxon, click the red point right of the appropriate taxon. Every taxon that is selected this way will be added in a list within the assistant, being connected by the operator "or". Upon clicking "accept" the whole list will be entered into the search mask field and you can continue by clicking ok and selecting the next field.

➢ The same principle applies to the fields containing personal names, such as the identifier or collector. Here you can enter family names or given names or institutions or parts thereof. You will get a list from which you can select the appropriate person. If more than one person is involved (e. g. Collectors: Smith and Miller), construct such a list in the right sequence by clicking the red dots right of the names. If you click "accept" after constructing the list, these will be entered as collective persons into the search mask.

➢ The geography is structured in a similar way and can be searched for continents, oceans, and adminstrative subdivisions as stated above.

> ➢ In searching for coordinates you can either search for a spot, a line (trawling line) or for a square. In this last case select "surface" rather than "line". The start and end coordinates will then be interpreted as the end point of the diagonal of a square. You can restrict your search for a surface area to an exact fit. That means that all parts of the items found must be included in the square defined by you (e. g. for trawling lines only those will be selected where the start **and** end points are both within the search square). The second possiblity will find all items that are partly covered by the search square (i.e. if either the start or end point of a trawling line lies within the search square). The last possiblity is that larger (more imprecise) areas include the search square itself.

Results

The search results are shown as a list containing in its columns systematic information, catalogue numbers and geographic information. Upon clicking the catalogue number you can access the corresponding data set with all the information details of the object.
You will first see the summary, but can freely move through the remaining information.
If you have included historical objects the result list will allow you to distinguish between current and former identifications. The latter are shown in grey, the current ones in black. To see details of the identification history click the catalogue number and move to the "History" card, where you will find the whole identification sequence of the specimen with the most recent (current) one at the bottom of the list. This allows you to see details of older type material even if the species has been synonymised subsequently, but also to know the current status and by whom it has been determined. In order to recognise historical identifications as such, all parts of the cards are clearly marked in red as "Historical". If you click the current identification in the history list the red marks saying "Historical" will disappear.
In the user interface freely accessible through the internet there is no feature for creating and downloading lists of taxa. If you need such a list, please contact us ar info_Sesam@senckenberg.de and specify for which taxon/taxa (or also geographic regions) you need lists. We will provide MS-Excel- or MS-Word - Files.