

History

The collections of the SNSB were founded about 200 years ago in 1759. Back then the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften) was commissioned by Elector Maximilian III Joseph to establish scientific collections. At that time, there weren't any universities in Munich. But natural history collections of minerals, rocks, animals and plants were already recognized as an important resource for research and teaching and were made the responsibility of the state.

The natural history collections were greatly expanded in 1807 with the transfer of the former "kurfürstlichen" Natural History Cabinet and the collections of the monasteries taken over by the state in the course of secularization, and soon also the natural history collections of the university.

On March 21, 1827, the 2nd Royal Decree of King Ludwig I established the "General Conservatory of the State's Scientific Collections," and the SNSB thus became independent of both the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and the university. From 1927, however, there was a complete separation of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and the Bavarian Natural History Collections. The SNSB were given a general director and became directly subordinate to a state ministry. Since 1969 the SNSB have borne the designation "Generaldirektion der Staatlichen Naturwissenschaftlichen Sammlungen Bayerns" as their official authority name.

However, some of the institutions that are now part of the SNSB were formerly independent, such as the Bamberg Museum of Natural History, which has existed since 1790. The youngest member of the SNSB is the Umwelt-Museum Oberfranken, which joined the SNSB in 1997. But even this museum is not a completely new foundation either: it already existed since the middle of the 19th century under various other names.



• Skeletal mount of Gophotherium, Palaeontological Museum Munich



• Topping-out ceremony of the Botanical Institute in 1912; photo: Archive of the Munich-Nymphenburg Botanical Garden