

## Online Library Catalogue FAQs

If you have a question that is not addressed here, or any comment on the Library's online catalogue, please email the Electronic Services Librarian, Bernard Scaife, [b.scaife@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:b.scaife@nhm.ac.uk)

### Search fundamentals

1. Can I use wildcards for substitution?
2. Does the system support truncation?
3. Are Boolean operators available?
4. How do I locate a specific serial title?
5. How do you find titles, like Journal of Botany, which contain only common words?
6. I've noticed the option to search by publication year. Can you search for a range of years?

### Display

7. What is the significance of the asterisks that appear in some records?
8. In what order do search results display?
9. When using the link to search for my terms in Google Scholar some results are returned with a link 'SFX@Natural History Museum', what does this mean?

### Search difficulties

10. How do I search for a phrase such as 'marine biology' without retrieving every item containing both words?
11. Trying to find the author Miriam Rothschild, I put in 'Rothschild, M' and got back Bruce M Rothschild. How should authors' names be entered?
12. What does 'Error in query NEAR "WITH"' mean? This was returned when I tried to find 'With Scott to the Pole'
13. How are non-roman alphabets (Russian, Chinese etc) represented?
14. I followed a link to another page then couldn't get back to your catalogue: what should I do?

### Search fundamentals

#### 1. Can I use I use wildcards for substitution?

Question mark (?) can be used to represent any single character. For example, wom?n will retrieve both woman and women.

The dollar sign (\$) represents a string of zero or more characters, so that pal\$ontology will retrieve palaeontology, palaontology and paleontology.

#### 2. Does the system support truncation?

The dollar sign (\$) can be used for right-hand truncation. It represents any string of zero or more characters. For example, geolog\$ will retrieve geology, geologist, geological etc.

### **3. Are Boolean operators available?**

Unicorn supports the Boolean operators, **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**. You can also use **XOR** = exclusive OR. For example, 'cats **XOR** dogs' will retrieve records containing either cats or dogs but not both.

### **4. How do I locate a specific serial title?**

Select Periodical Title from the dropdown search options. It is also possible to search by the ISSN of the serial under the default 'Words or phrase' option, e.g.: *0123-4567*.

### **5. How do you find titles, like *Journal of Botany*, which contain all common words?**

There are several methods for limiting the number of results returned, but we recommend using the **Browse** search and selecting 'periodical title'.

### **6. I've noticed the option to search by publication year. Can you search for a range of years?**

You can use the less than symbol (<) to search for dates prior to a given year, the greater than symbol (>) to search for dates after a given year and the hyphen (-) to specify a range of dates, 'pubyear 1975-1985' will retrieve records published between 1975 and 1985; 'pubyear <1990' will retrieve records published before 1990.

## **Display**

### **7. What is the significance of the asterisks that appear in some records?**

The asterisks represent diacritic characters (accents etc) that cannot be displayed by all Web browsers.

### **8. In what order do search results display?**

Items records are displayed in descending order of publication date. The most recently published items are displayed first.

### **9. When using the link to search for my terms in Google Scholar some results are returned with a link 'SFX@Natural\_History\_Museum, what does this mean?**

This link appears next to any search result for which the NHM has access via its electronic services.

## **Search difficulties**

**10. How do I search for a phrase such as 'marine biology' without retrieving every item containing both words?**

**a. Use quotations:**

For an exact match on a phrase such as marine biology, enclose the phrase in single quotation marks.

**b. Use operators:**

The operator **ADJ** - for adjacent - can be used to form phrases, 'marine **ADJ** biology' will retrieve only records containing these two words together and in that order. 'Marine **ADJ5** biology will return records if biology is adjacent to marine within 5 words. Other proximity operators are also available:

**NEAR**: adjacent in either order

**WITH**: in same sentence

**SAME**: in same paragraph or field

**c. Match on 'Exact'.**

Use the **Advanced search** and change the match on drop down selection at the bottom from **Keyword** to **Exact**. This will retrieve only records that exactly match the query string.

**11. Trying to find the author Miriam Rothschild, I put in 'Rothschild, M' and got back Bruce M Rothschild. How should authors' names be entered?**

We recommend using the **Browse** search type entering last name followed by as much of the first name as you know.

**12. What does 'Error in query NEAR "WITH"' mean? This was returned when I tried to find 'With Scott to the Pole'.**

"With" is a reserved word. This will give an error if used at the start of a phrase or will affect results if used within a phrase. To search successfully, you have to enter **"With" Scott to the pole**. Other reserved words include **and, or, not, near** and **same**. These must be entered within double quotes to be used as a genuine word rather than as a search operator.

**13. How are non-roman alphabets (Russian, Chinese etc) represented?**

For material catalogued after 2000, we use the same transliteration standards as the American Library Association and Library of Congress (except for diacritics and ligatures on Russian characters, which we do not include). We are gradually correcting earlier entries.

**14. I followed a link to another page then couldn't get back to the catalogue; what should I do?**

Clicking on a web link in the library catalogue will open a new browser window. Close or minimize this window to return to the library catalogue.