Bird bone streaming

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3-D digitised skull of a little bush moa from Auckland War Memorial museum. Credit: Massey University

A new website for viewing 3-D bird bones aims to make bird bones in museums more accessible for research and teaching.

Massey University senior lecturer Dr. Daniel Thomas has launched a

new website, called Fauna Toolkit: Bird Bones for students and researchers interested in identifying bird bones.

Inspired by existing initiatives like Aves3D.org, the site currently contains 159 bones from 28 species, including many New Zealand species, such as the Little Bush Moa, the North Island Brown Kiwi, and Kārearea (New Zealand falcon), and Dr. Thomas plans to add more items.

Dr. Thomas says the project is designed around the philosophy of making objects that are not on display in museums, more easily available.

"Museum collections are often rich with local species and may have fewer specimens from overseas, meaning that researchers may need to travel internationally if they want to view bones from certain birds. A project like this one can make bones of rare species potentially accessible anywhere."

The digitised models were created by scanning collections belonging to the Auckland War Memorial Museum and Canterbury Museum.

Dr. Thomas intends to use this site for his own research and teaching, including the bones module of the 300-level Ornithology class he teaches.

"Imagine walking along a beach and discovering a bird bone recently exposed out of a sand dune" says Dr. Thomas. We can use the 3-D models to identify where in the body the bone is from, and we could maybe use the models to identify the species."

"Paul Scofield from Canterbury Museum first encouraged me to launch the website and Guy Annan at Auckland Museum guided the site's

design. We look forward to continuing to grow the site in the future."

Provided by Massey University