

# Seminário Permanente de História do Brasil

*“JOHANN BAPTIST SPIX: HIS EXPEDITION IN BRAZIL IN 1817-1820, AND HIS IMPACT TO SCIENCE”*

**Klaus Schönitzer**

(Zoologische Staatssammlung München)

## **Resumo/Abstract**

Johann Baptist Spix was born in 1781 in Northern Bavaria. He studied philosophy and medicine. He was appointed by the king in Munich as zoologist to improve the zoological collections on the base of modern science as he had learnt in Paris, at that time the centre of science. Spix published a number of investigations in zoology before he was appointed by the king to join an expedition to Brazil together with the younger botanist C. F. Ph. Martius in 1817. These two travelled through large parts of Brazil and were the first naturalists collecting in the Amazon. They collected not only animals and plants, but also any other objects like ethnological artifacts from different indigenous nations. They reported their modes of life and customs and collected many word lists. They brought two indigenous children from two nations to Munich, but these have died soon. Spix published several books on the animals of Brazil, he discovered and described many species for example the famous Spix's Macaw. Spix died in Munich already in 1826 on a tropical disease; because of his early death the impact of Spix on zoology, ethnology and the exploration of Brazil was often underestimated.