

SPNHC

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections

Collection Forum

Spring 1989, Volume 5, Number 1

PAPERS

ARCHIVAL STORAGE OF DISINTEGRATING LABELS FROM FLUID-PRESERVED SPECIMENS

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Abstract - The disintegration of paper labels attached to alcohol-preserved specimens is a common curatorial problem. A method of removing, replacing, repairing, and storing these labels before the data are irretrievable has been devised. A storage system for film negatives, with mylar and acid-free paper components, has been adapted for this purpose. This filing system provides an archival-quality storage environment that prolongs the life of the labels and allows for convenient retrieval. Handling protocols ensure that both was removed, when it was removed and by whom, and where it is to be found.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS OF RADON SOURCE FOSSIL VERTEBRATE SPECIMENS

MARY R. CARMAN AND JEFFREY D. CARMAN

Abstract - Vertebrate fossils from the Jurassic Morrison Formation, Plio-Pleistocene Hagerman Lake Beds, and Oligocene Cypress Hills Formation of western North America, and the Permian Karoo Sequence of South Africa have been found to be radioactive and radon sources. Radon is an odorless, tasteless, and invisible radioactive gas formed the decay of uranium. Fossil vertebrates may concentrate the radon precursor, because of its chemical similarities to calcium. Radon daughter elements collect on airborne dust and, if inhaled or ingested, increase the risk of cancer. Good ventilation and handling techniques are recommended in areas where radioactive specimens are present.

EFFECTS OF INITIAL PREPARATION METHODS ON DERMESTID CLEANING OF OSTEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

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Abstract - The influence of different processing procedures on the osteological cleaning abilities of dermestid beetles was tested using dried skulls originating from fresh, frozen, and fluid-preserved specimens. The objective was to identify preparation procedures that can provide optimal conditions for effective cleaning of skeletal material. Standard of fresh and frozen specimens proved to be the most suitable for dermestid cleaning. Although there are problems associated with some fluid-preserved specimens there are preservation benefits that might encourage its use.

GOLDEN OLDIES: CURATING SEM SPECIMENS

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Abstract - Literature on scanning electron microscopy (SEM) specimen preparation is extensive but permanent storage requirements for coated and mounted specimens are rarely mentioned. Uncoated specimens may produce acceptable SEM images, and it may be necessary to coat holotype specimens for SEM investigation.

SEM examination of specimens coated ten years previously shows no indication of the coating peeling off, and after the coatings were removed, the specimens showed no damage. Sturdy specimens may remain coated for long-term storage. Fragile microscopic specimens may require storage in vacuum desiccators. Institutions should include procedures for the use of specimens in SEM research in their curatorial and loan policies, and some suggestions for curatorial guidelines are presented.

NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT AT THE
ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM
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Abstract - Management of natural history collections at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) is the direct responsibility of each of ten Science departments, within the limits of institutional policies and procedures. The Co-ordinator of Collections Management makes recommendations to management on the best use of physical and financial resources to assure the welfare of the collections and co-ordinates cataloguing activities on the PARIS system of the Canadian Heritage Information Network.

A TREATMENT FOR BISON HORNSHEATHS
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Abstract - Archaeologists and paleobiologists have a long tradition of borrowing and trading field techniques for conservation of artifacts and specimens. Over a period of several field seasons in Labrador, a treatment for wet archaeological baleen was developed. This caught the attention of a conservator with the National Museum of Natural Sciences (NMNS), Ottawa, who saw this as a possible treatment for a large collection of bison hornsheaths, which are similar structurally to baleen and had been collected under similar field conditions. This paper discusses the treatment developed for the bison hornsheaths.

Reviews

- Mammal collection management by H.H. Genoways, C. Jones, and O.L. Rossolimo, eds.
- A conservation manual for the field archaeologist, by Catherine Sease