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CURATION OF INVERTEBRATE FOSSIL COLLECTIONS AT THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

Paula M. Sumpter

*Department of Geology, Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 West Wells Street, Milwaukee,
Wisconsin 53233*

In 1984 the Geology section of the Milwaukee Public Museum was awarded the first of three grants from the National Science Foundation to curate the invertebrate fossil collection and computerize the accompanying data. The SAS (Statistical Analysis System) database was chosen as appropriate software, and scientists and programmers worked together to determine the content and format of the database. A collections manager was hired to manage the project and perform most of the necessary duties. Data verification and entry have been in progress for six years. Specimens were cataloged by locality number and data entered into four data sets. The data sets were later combined by means of the locality number for reports. The project has been very successful and is scheduled for completion in August 1991.

REHOUSING OF PALEONTOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS IN THE MUSEO NACIONAL DE CIENCIAS NATURALES, MADRID, SPAIN

Angel Montero and Carmen Di guez

*Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, C.S.I.C., Jos Guti rrez Abascal no. 2., 28006
Madrid, Spain*

After evaluating various types of storage containers, the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales has selected clear polystyrene boxes with lids to store its paleontological collections. Specimens which are too large for the boxes are stored in custom made polyethylene bags inside cardboard boxes.

INVESTIGATION OF THE CAUSES OF STRUCTURAL DAMAGE TO TEETH IN NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

Stephen L. Williams

*Natural Science Research Laboratory, Museum of Texas Tech University, P.O. Box 4499,
Lubbock, Texas 79409-3191*

A study of tooth deterioration in specimens of Recent mammals was conducted. The condition of several series of bat (*Artibeus jamaicensis*) skulls was monitored during field procedures, laboratory processing, and with controlled microenvironments that simulated temperature and relative

humidity in permanent storage areas of many research collections. By monitoring the incidence of tooth cracking, particularly in canines and second premolars, it was determined that moisture changes and content were major factors in tooth stability. Moisture changes during washing procedures greatly accelerated cracking. Teeth subjected to relative humidities below 50% tended to be more fragile and susceptible to damage; below 40%, deterioration increased substantially because of desiccation.

COMPUTERIZATION BENEFITS FOR SMALL INVERTEBRATE NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO INSECTA

John A. Adams, Jean-Pierre R. Le Blanc, and D. Gregory Bishop

Departments of Biology (JAA, JRL) and Mathematics and Physics (DGB), Nova Scotia Agricultural College, P.O. Box 550, Truro, Nova Scotia B2N 5E3, Canada

The computerization of a small size invertebrate collection (less than 100,000 specimens) can have many advantages, such as easier accessibility to collection data, and clearer perception of areas needing development and of the general evolution of the collection. Of many important results of automation, nine are discussed. These gains are: the improvement of collection organization; phylogeny standardization; taxonomic updating; networking with other collections; protection of collection data; supplemental data storage; identification of future collection projects; quick generation of specific reports; and improved public relations. The process involved in the establishment of an Insecta database for the A. D. Pickett Entomological Museum at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, is also detailed.

ALGINATE IMPRESSION MATERIAL

Gerardo De Iuliis and Leonard J. S. Tsuji

*Department of Zoology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1, Canada (GDI);
Department of Biology, York University, North York, Ontario M3J 1P3, Canada (LJST)*

Alginate molds are as accurate as molds made from other impression materials commonly used in paleontology. When the correct procedures for mixing and taking the impression are followed, alginate provides an inexpensive and quick means of obtaining accurate casts, for example, when visiting other institutions or when specimens being examined are unavailable for loan. We have standardized a cost-effective, time-efficient procedure using alginate in the production of casts for paleontology. Alginate is especially accurate in reproducing dentitions, but has been used in the casting of other skeletal structures.

Reviews

- Conservation and Exhibitions, 1987, N. Stolow

Archaeological Wood, Properties, Chemistry, and Preservation, 1990,
R. M. Rowell and R. J. Barbour, eds.

- The Care of Photographs, 1987, S. Rempel

Notices

- 1992 Annual SPNHC Meeting
- International Symposium on the Preservation and Conservation of
Natural History Collections. May 10-15, 1992 Spain
- Erratum
- Advertising