

## Collections Care

### Natural History Collections

Natural history collections offer scientists specimens to study changes in our environment over time and the general public a better understanding of the natural world. The sheer breadth of materials, from organic to inorganic, as well as health and safety concerns make it difficult to determine a one-size-fits-all policy for the preservation of these collections. As with any museum or personal collection, however, appropriate handling techniques and storage are the first line of defense. Avoid fluctuating and inappropriate temperatures and humidity levels in storage and exhibition areas. Understand the special handling requirements for the type of collection, such as transporting objects using trays; handling only when necessary and with the understanding that these items are irreplaceable; using nitrile gloves with many biological collections and clean, bare hands with fossils; and practicing general good housekeeping in storage and exhibition areas. Further tips on caring for natural history collections can be found below. See also other "Caring for Your Collection" toolkits based on materials, such as "Glass, Ceramics, and Stone" and "Organic Materials."

### General Care and Cautions

- National Park Service:
  - ["Guidelines for the Handling of Pesticide Contaminated Collections"](#) (Conserve O Gram, January 2002, number 2/19)
  - [Museum Handbook: Appendix Q, "Curatorial Care of Natural History Collections"](#)

### Biological, Entomological, Vertebrate/Invertebrate and Taxidermy Collections

- Connecting to Collections Care: ["Troublesome Trophies and Fragile Feathered Friends: Introduction to the Care of Historic Taxidermy" Webinar](#) (Presenters: George Dante, Wildlife Preservations, and Eugenie Milroy, American Institute of Conservation (AIC))
- Fuller, Tamsen: ["Storage Methods for Taxidermy Specimens"](#) (Western Association for Art Conservation Newsletter, volume 14 number 2)
- National Park Service:
  - ["Curation of Insect Specimens"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2006, number 11/8)
  - ["Handling and Care of Dry Bird and Mammal Specimens"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2006, number 11/9)
  - ["Labeling Natural History Collections"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2005, number 11/6)
  - [Museum Handbook: Appendix T, "Curatorial Care of Biological Collections"](#)
  - ["Safe Storage and Handling of Natural History Specimens preserved in Fluid"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2001, number 2/18)
  - ["Vertebrate Skeletons: Preparation and Storage"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2006, number 11/7)

## Paleontological and Geological Collections

- National Park Service:
  - ["Health and Safety Issues with Geological Specimens"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2006, number 11/11)
  - ["Museum Handbook: Appendix U, "Curatorial Care of Paleontological and Geological Collections"](#)
  - ["Radioactive Minerals"](#) (Conserve O Gram, September 2006, number 11/10)
  - ["Storage Concerns for Geological Collections"](#) (Conserve O Gram, April 1998, number 11/2)