



Museum of Natural Science

## Specimen Loan Request Protocol Section of Ornithology

### Specimen loans

1. **Loans for scientific research:** The LSUMNS will ship specimens to researchers in the USA under the following conditions:

a. A formal signed request on institutional letterhead stationery (pdfs preferred) is emailed to Frederick H. Sheldon, Acting Curator of Birds. This request must explain briefly why the specimens are needed, who will be responsible for their care, how they will be cared for, and which specimens are needed. Please be as specific as possible with respect to taxa, localities, dates, ages, and sex.

b. The request is counter-signed by the museum curator who will be responsible for the loan (unless the requester and the curator are the same). Requests from students must also be counter-signed by their major professor.

c. The requester agrees to acknowledge the LSUMNS in publications that use the specimens and to be responsible for sending the LSUMNS a reprint of such publications.

Loans are normally for a period of 6 months. Requests for extensions of this period should be secured prior to expiration. We do not send specimens to private individuals or institutions that lack proper facilities for housing specimens. To comply with USDA-APHIS regulations, institutions receiving loans involving specimens imported into the USA after about 1973 must possess a valid USDA Transport Permit. Because we process as many as 100 loans per year, typically there is a backlog. So, please be patient. Unfortunately, we are extremely reluctant to send specimens internationally because of the increasing difficulty in dealing with courier services, in obtaining legal clearances, and risks of loss or damage during import/export through customs.

2. **Loans for scientific illustration:** Same as above, except that we require the illustrator to sign an agreement in advance that includes a guarantee that the LSUMNS will receive a gratis copy of the book or article in which the illustrations appear.

3. **Loans for commercial or personal artwork:** We do NOT loan specimens for these purposes. However, we are more than willing to let artists use certain specimens if they arrange to visit the collection and to use them on-site.

### Tissue Sample Requests

Requests for frozen or chemically preserved tissue samples (e.g., feathers, skin, blood) should be directed to Dr. Frederick H. Sheldon, Curator of Genetic Resources. Generally, such requests are granted only if the samples cannot be obtained from populations of living birds.

## **Destructive sampling from specimens for tissues**

The Section of Ornithology will allow destructive sampling only if the material cannot be obtained from living populations because of permit issues (e.g., endangered species, political problems). Occasionally, we allow removal of a few contour feathers of older specimens of large birds for radioisotope analysis if the primary focus of the project has to do with historical changes in diet. The request process is the same as for a specimen loan.

## **Information requests**

The LSUMNS is willing to send specimen label-data and occasionally measurements to researchers provided the request is not excessive (i.e., not more than an hour or two of work). As with loans, we must receive a formal signed request on institutional letterhead stationery (emailed pdf preferred) explaining briefly why the data are needed, and how they will be used. An email message by itself is not sufficient for the formal request. Please be as specific as possible with respect to taxa, localities, dates, ages, sex, etc. Students must have this request counter-signed by their advisor. Again, please be patient as there may be a backlog of requests.

Information requests that seek to acquire blocks of original specimen data that will be repackaged into other databases will not be granted except in very special circumstances.

## **Visiting the Ornithology Collection**

Those interested in visiting the LSUMNS Collection of Birds to obtain research data are welcome to do so provided that we know the visitor's schedule in advance of arrival. Before visitors are allowed to use the collection, they will be briefed on our rules and policies; therefore, arrangements have to be made with either Sheldon or Collection Manager, Steve Cardiff, for this briefing before the collection can be used (i.e., do not expect our office staff or students to just let you into the collection). Qualified researchers are usually given a key that permits 24/7 access.

Dr. Frederick H. Sheldon, Acting Curator of Birds [fsheld@lsu.edu](mailto:fsheld@lsu.edu)  
Steven W. Cardiff, Collections Manager [scardif@lsu.edu](mailto:scardif@lsu.edu)