

MAKING MAXIMUM USE OF INCIDENTAL MORTALITIES DURING BANDING OPERATIONS

Occasionally, banders are faced with dealing with dead birds at banding stations. The question is what to do with them. Such specimens represent excellent material for collections that reside at museums or nature centers because usually their plumage and skeletons are in decent condition. It is a shame to waste such useful material.

In the past we have told you of several institutions that would like to receive specimens. These institutions still greatly appreciate any available specimen so please continue to send any that may arise during the year. Below are listed the organizations that have requested to receive materials.

1) Storing specimens--

- a) Make a simple cone of paper, write the bird's info. At a minimum **include species, age, sex, date, location (city, county, state), brief description of habitat, name of collector**. However, all the information that is asked on a MAPS data sheet would be helpful especially fresh weight and extent of CP as these measurements change in dead specimens.
- b) Put the bird bill-first into the cone, put the cone in a ZipLoc bag (preferably a freezer type rather than a sandwich type). Freezer burn and moisture loss are always problems in smaller passerine birds.
- c) Try to get the bird to a freezer ASAP or at least to an ice chest to minimize decomposition.

2) Shipping specimens--

Once you have several specimens saved or as the season is drawing to its end, contact one of the folks listed below to get a FedEx charge number and/or shipping instructions. Some contacts can supply a freezer pack and cooler while others ask you to box them up with a small gel freezer pack and insulate the box with newspaper. Be sure to save and send receipts, because the contact may have a budget for reimbursing you. **Send Next Day only!**

3) Using specimens —

If you are donating to a museum in your local area ask to see their collections. Often special appointments can be made to see the collections and you can use them to work on your ageing and sexing skills and to identify molt limits.

Contacts:

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These specimens are very valuable and the above contacts would greatly appreciate any specimens you can send them. We also encourage you to identify a worthy repository in your area with the permits, specimen preparation expertise, and time to make use of the specimens.