

FWC - Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

COLLECTION POLICY

1. Purpose: To provide overall guidelines for the management of Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (hereafter "the Institute") collections of organisms.
2. Authority: Chapter 370.02(2)(b), Florida Statutes.
3. Goals of Institute collections:
 - A. To acquire and conserve specimens of marine and coastal organisms of Florida and other geographic regions;
 - B. To develop and disseminate information on identification, diversity, natural history, and conservation of Florida marine and coastal organisms;
 - C. To provide data and analyses to local, state, and federal planning and regulatory agencies;
 - D. To provide specimens and data to qualified scientific investigators for studies of the natural history of Florida marine and coastal organisms.
4. Scope and content of collections:

The Institute acquires and conserves specimens for scientific study, identification aids, and educational purposes. The resulting collections are divided into individual collection entities of fish, invertebrates, SEAMAP larval fish, living and preserved plankton, and plants. (The SEAMAP larval fish collection is the property of the United States government and is maintained at the Institute by contractual agreement. Although that collection is not governed by this general Institute policy, an individual management policy for the proper maintenance of that collection, following the general principles outlined herein, are made a part of this document.) Each collection includes specimens; written and electronic records relating to the specimens (e.g., field-data pages, catalogues, labels); loan invoices documenting use of collections; necessary legal documents (permits and licenses), if required; and publications relating to the collection. Reference specimens maintained as identification aids by survey projects located at the Institute's field stations must be a subset of the research collections located at the main laboratories in St. Petersburg. Biological survey and inventory projects shall deposit voucher specimens, with pertinent field data, of each species collected into the appropriate Institute collection entity. Duplicate specimens will be lent by the collection to the field station as identification reference material. Computer

databases of collection-related data may be shared by the collection entities or maintained separately by an individual collection entity. Institute-owned photographic records of specimens, habitats, and fieldwork necessary for the study of the collections are maintained by the appropriate collection entity or the Institute library and are available for use by others through short- and long-term loans. Library materials necessary for the study of the collections are maintained by the Institute library and are accessible by curators through short- and long-term loans.

5. Acquisition of specimens:

A. The Institute acquires specimens by field activities of Institute staff, transfer from other government agencies or private entities, gift, and bequest. The Institute is responsible for maintaining and conserving the specimens in the collections in the public trust; therefore, the Institute accepts only those specimens for which it can provide proper care, conservation, and storage unless otherwise mandated by Florida statutes or other appropriate authority.

B. Each collection entity is responsible for its own direction and growth as detailed in the individual collection management policies.

C. Acceptance of specimens is the responsibility of the appropriate supervisor, subject to proper authorization within the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, with the following exceptions:

i. Acceptance or rejection of specimens of restricted or endangered species shall be determined by Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, or designee;

ii. Acceptance or rejection of illegally obtained specimens shall be determined by Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, or designee.

D. Priorities in accepting specimens include:

i. Specimens that document occurrences, abundances, morphological or genetic variation, or other scientific attributes of species in Florida, especially those from areas threatened by activities of man;

ii. Specimens that document pre-disturbance occurrences, abundances, morphological variation, etc., of species from areas that have been altered by man or natural event (i.e., hurricanes);

iii. Specimens from areas other than Florida used in comparative studies of organisms, populations, and communities.

E. All specimens accepted and catalogued into the collections must have been obtained legally. Specimens should be accompanied by copies of any necessary licenses and/or permits as proof that they were obtained in full compliance with the laws and regulations of the State of Florida, the United States, and international treaties such as CITES. The Institute may accept specimens that have been confiscated and offered to the Institute by appropriate government authorities. If an illegally obtained specimen is offered to the Institute, it may be

provisionally accepted for safekeeping until appropriate state or federal authorities are notified. The specimen may not be formally accepted or catalogued into the collection until final disposition has been determined by appropriate authorities and legal authorization has been fully documented and approved.

F. All specimens obtained by donation are to be free and clear of restrictions on their use, exhibition, loan, dispersal, or future disposition. Specimens so obtained shall be documented by an invoice signed by a member of the curatorial staff and approved by the appropriate Institute supervisor, or by correspondence signed by the accepting authority acknowledging the donation. This documentation shall be kept on file in the records of the appropriate collection entity.

G. Maintenance and disposition of all specimens accepted as a long-term loan shall be governed by letters of agreement signed by the appropriate Research Administrator II or III and the authorized representative of the lending entity.

H. The Institute cannot and will not guarantee that specimens donated or transferred on long-term loan will be placed on exhibition or that they will be stored intact as a single collection.

I. Terms and commencement of ownership vary with the method of acquisition:

i. Specimens and associated data retained during Institute-authorized field-collecting activities of Institute staff, except SEAMAP ichthyoplankton, become the property of the Institute at the time of their collection unless otherwise mandated by inter-institutional agreements. (See also Institute policy 1000-C, "Catch, Bycatch and Specimens, Disposal", K. A. Steidinger, dated 7 July 1983.)

ii. Donated specimens become the property of the Institute after an inventory has been completed, an invoice prepared and signed by the appropriate Research Administrator II or III, and a copy of the invoice is signed by the donor or authorized agent and returned to the Institute.

iii. Specimens transferred on long-term loan remain the property of the lending entity.

6. Record Keeping:

Careful, detailed record keeping is essential to the scientific value of a collection and the specimens contained in it. In addition, field notes and other documentation associated with specimens may provide the means by which the Institute establishes the legal ownership of the specimens.

Collection records should be made in a timely manner, housed in secure locations, and physically preserved by proper handling and storage methods. When possible, records should be kept on archival-quality paper to ensure their preservation.

7. Accessioning procedures:

A. Accessioning is the process by which specimens are accepted into the collection. An accession unit may consist of a single specimen or multiple lots of specimens. Any accession unit processed into the collections shall receive a unique, collection-specific number or letter designation to be assigned by the individual collection entities.

B. Specific accessioning procedures shall be the responsibility of the appropriate curatorial personnel of each collection entity and shall be contained in the individual collection-entity management policy.

8. Deaccessioning procedures:

A. Deaccessioning is the process by which specimens are removed from the permanent collection, including intentional destruction (e.g., for anatomical studies). However, deaccessioning does not void ownership by the Institute.

B. Specimens may be deaccessioned under the following circumstances:

i. The specimen(s) has been destroyed, lost, or has deteriorated to the extent that it no longer has any scientific value.

ii. The specimen(s) is determined to duplicate information on abundance, occurrence, and morphological and ontogenetic variation that a smaller number of lots adequately document. Any specimens deaccessioned under this provision may be transferred to the status of "educational material", which is used for demonstration purposes at schools or other educational and training situations where specimens are subject to rough handling, or may be offered to the Florida Museum of Natural History under provisions of Chapter 240.515, Florida Statutes, or to other repositories as appropriate.

iii. The specimen(s) is part of a type series to be deposited at an institution other than the Florida Museum of Natural History. Most museums will not accept type specimens on long-term or permanent loan; they will only accept donated specimens. As this requires the relinquishment of Institute property, deposition of such specimens in non-State institutions must be authorized by the appropriate Research Administrator II or III under the provisions of current Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Institute delegations of authority.

iv. Non-type specimens are deposited in institutions as vouchers of published work. Authorization of this is the same as in Section 8(B)(iii) above.

v. The Institute ceases to maintain specimen collections. Specimens deaccessioned under this provision shall be offered first to the Florida Museum of Natural History under provisions of Chapter 240.515, Florida Statutes, then to other appropriate repositories as necessary should the Florida Museum of Natural History decline to accept them. Specimens on long-term loan to the Institute shall be returned to the lending museum or will be transferred to the Florida Museum of Natural History or other appropriate repository upon receipt of an agreement to do so by the lender if the lender is a private entity.

C. The catalogue numbers of deaccessioned specimens are not to be reassigned, and a note explaining the reason for deaccessioning and subsequent fate of the specimen is to be appended to the records of that specimen lot.

9. Cataloguing procedure:

A. Cataloguing is the inscriptive process of recording a specimen and its associated data.

B. Each specimen lot shall be assigned a unique, sequential number. This catalogue number is the "index" for subsequent access to the specimen and its associated data (the scientific name, quantity, locality, date of collection, collector, etc.).

C. The catalogue number of a specimen is to be cited whenever possible in any published citation of that specimen.

D. Specific cataloguing procedures are detailed in the collection management policies of the individual collection entities.

10. Use and access to collections:

A. Use of the Institute collections for scientific and educational purposes is encouraged.

B. A bona fide user of the collections is generally a professional colleague, but graduate students and members of the public may be granted access upon approval by the appropriate Research Administrator II or III. Persons not known to curatorial staff shall be approved by the appropriate Research Administrator only after consultation with other professionals. Access to Institute collections by noncuratorial Institute staff is generally available with prior authorization from the appropriate section administrator.

C. Access to the collections may be denied to anyone, including Institute staff, based on a past record of abuse of user privileges, improper handling of specimens in this Institute or in other museums, a poor record of returning specimens borrowed from this Institute, or negative recommendations by colleagues. Persons denied access to Institute collections may appeal to the Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, who shall consult with the responsible curator prior to rendering a final decision.

D. Uses of collections and collection-based data for other than scientific research leading to scholarly publication or in-house processed reports to planning and enforcement agencies are subject to the restrictions detailed in the Association of Systematic Collections Position on Collections Use Agreements (Appendix X) unless otherwise covered by state statutes.

E. Access to collections via loan of specimens or data is detailed under "Loan Policy".

F. Access to collections by members of the general public may be granted by the appropriate Research Administrator, but such persons shall be supervised by collections staff at all times.

G. In-house access to collections is granted on a collection-by-collection basis for all personnel. Non-curatorial Institute staff shall be supervised by collections staff.

H. A copy of any publication that results wholly or in part from use of Institute collections shall be sent to the appropriate collection for archiving in the collection records, and a copy shall also be catalogued into the Institute library.

11. Loan Policy:

A. A loan is the temporary, physical transfer of specimens from one institution to another without transfer of ownership. The Institute makes or receives loans for the purposes of research and education. Lending or borrowing is undertaken only under the terms of a loan agreement that forms a contract between the lender and the borrower, and specifies the terms and conditions of the loan, including the respective responsibilities of each party.

B. Loans are made or received by each collection entity according to specific policies established by the curatorial staff of that collection, but such policies shall comply with the following requirements:

i. Normally, loans are made to institutions, not individuals. Loan documents identify the individual at the receiving institution who is directly responsible for the loan. Under special circumstances, a loan may be made to an individual without institutional affiliation at the discretion of the appropriate supervisor. Loans are not made to students, but rather to their supervising professor.

ii. The institution or individual receiving the loan is responsible for its safekeeping and safe return.

iii. Loan of Institute specimens shall be approved by the responsible Supervisor.

iv. A loan invoice listing specimen catalogue numbers or other means of identifying the specimen(s) shall be prepared for each loan. Two copies shall accompany the specimen(s), one of which must be signed and returned by a representative of the receiving institution. The signed copy of the invoice shall be annotated with the date of return of the specimen(s) as well as any comments on changes in the condition of the specimen(s) and kept on file in the permanent records of the collection.

v. Specimens on loan must be maintained and handled according to conditions specified by each collection entity's policy.

vi. Permission to alter the condition of the specimen(s) for

anatomical, osteological, genetic, or other purposes must be granted in writing from the appropriate Supervisor prior to such alteration. Appeals of the decision of the Supervisor may be referred to the Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

vii. Specimens on loan shall not be used for general educational purposes or retained for possible future research by students without prior, written consent of the appropriate Supervisor.

viii. No specimen(s) on loan may be transferred to a third party without prior, written consent of the Supervisor.

ix. No specimen(s) on loan may be transferred to another institution or address without prior, written consent of the Supervisor.

x. Material on loan should be returned promptly by the borrower. Requests for extension of loan periods may be granted by the appropriate Supervisor.

xi. Loans shall be returned by the same method and covered by the same or greater amount of insurance as used by the Institute to send the material.

xii. The Institute reserves the right to recall any loan for any reason.

xiii. The Institute shall be informed of any change in the identification of a specimen on loan.

xiv. If loan privileges are abused, the offending institution or individual may be refused further loans.

xv. If, in the Institute curator's opinion, the specimen(s) cannot be safely lent, such requests are to be denied.

xvi. Loan shipments must be accompanied by required documentation for legal transport and customs regulations.

xvii. The Institute and the appropriate collection entity shall be credited in any publication based wholly or in part on Institute collections, and a copy of any such publication shall be provided to the collection unit for archiving in the permanent records.

12. Conflict of interest:

A. All Institute curatorial staff must comply with all statutes, directives, and instructions of the State of Florida and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission concerning conflicts of interest.

B. Institute curatorial staff shall not provide appraisals of collections to donors or potential donors. Any appraisal of the monetary worth of a collection must be obtained by the donor from a third-party appraiser prior to accessioning into the collection.

13. Care of collections:

A. Responsibility for proper care of the collections rests with the Institute and is carried out by the curatorial staff of each collection entity. Collection care includes responsibility for both the physical condition and storage of specimens and their documentation. Curatorial staff shall use professionally accepted practices and storage facilities to insure the collection's integrity.

B. Curatorial staff shall follow professionally accepted pest-control practices. If use of pesticides or fumigants is necessary, all state and federal guidelines shall be followed.

14. Chemical safety: All curatorial staff shall abide by all Institute chemical safety policies.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE FISH AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (FWRI)

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (FWC)

AND

THE FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (FLMNH)

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA (UF)

Florida Statute 240.515 states, in part, "The functions of the Florida Museum of Natural History, located at the University of Florida, are...to collect and maintain a depository of biological, archaeological, and ethnographic specimens and materials in sufficient numbers and quantities to provide within the state and region a base for research on the variety, evolution, and conservation of wild species; the composition, distribution, importance, and functioning of natural ecosystems...it shall be the duty of each state institution, department, and agency to cooperate by depositing in the museum voucher and type biological specimens collected as part of the normal research and monitoring duties of its staff and to transfer to the museum those biological specimens and collections in its possession but not being actively curated or used in the research or teaching of that institution, department or agency. The Florida Museum of Natural History is empowered to accept, preserve, maintain, or dispose of these specimens and materials in a manner which makes each collection and its accompanying data available for research and use by the staff of the museum and by cooperating institutions, departments, agencies, and qualified independent researchers."

Both FLMNH and FWRI recognize and aver that the Invertebrate and Ichthyological Collections currently being maintained and curated at FWRI are invaluable resources that must be protected and maintained according to accepted curatorial standards. Both parties further recognize and aver that under Florida Statute 240.515, cited in part above, it is their joint responsibility to ensure that the Collections are protected and maintained according to accepted curatorial standards. Both parties recognize and agree that without a dedicated funding source to support them, the Collections are currently a financial burden to FWRI. Both parties recognize and agree that, under the Florida statute cited above, the Collections should be transferred intact to FLMNH if FWRI becomes unable to support the Collections. Both parties further recognize and agree that FLMNH currently does not have the facilities, finances, or available personnel to accept the Collections intact.

As a consequence of the aforementioned conditions and agreements, and in order to comply with Florida Statute 240.515, FLMNH and FWRI agree to establish a close working relationship as cooperating sister agencies. They further agree to act jointly to ensure that the Invertebrate and Ichthyological Collections currently maintained at FWRI will be supported and maintained according to accepted curatorial standards in perpetuity; and to share specimens and data as needed. In order to achieve this goal, both parties accept the duties and responsibilities assigned to each of them as set out below.

1. FWRI will support, maintain and curate the Collections according to accepted curatorial standards until such time as FLMNH has sufficient facilities, personnel and funding to allow them to accept the FWRI collections intact if that should prove necessary. When FLMNH has sufficient facilities, personnel and funding to accept the FWRI Collections intact, FWRI will evaluate its situation and determine whether certain portions of the Collections should be moved to FLMNH.
2. FWRI will make a good faith effort to get the Collections database on line in a format compatible with the format currently being used by FLMNH and to establish a link between the database at FLMNH and the database at FWRI in order to enable qualified researchers to readily access the data currently being maintained at each of these cooperating sister agencies.
3. FWRI will deposit all Invertebrate type specimens at FLMNH (all Ichthyological type specimens have already been deposited at FLMNH) as soon as there is an appropriate, curated collection established at FLMNH.
4. When FLMNH has the facilities, personnel and financial resources to accept the Collections, FWRI agrees that even if there is the need or desire on the part of FWRI to maintain a voucher/reference collection at

its facilities, it will transfer all Collection specimens other than a size/ age/ developmental stage/ distribution series of each species necessary to the work of FWRI to FLMNH.

5. FLMNH will offer to accept the FWRI Collections at such time as they have the necessary and appropriate facilities, personnel and funding if FWRI feels the need to transfer the Collections intact to FLMNH.
6. FLMNH will provide expertise and experience to FWRI as needed to facilitate FWRI's effort to get its Collection data online and linked to the FLMNH Collections site.
7. FLMNH will make a good faith effort to assign personnel to the FWRI Collections if key personnel leave FWRI and cannot be replaced by other qualified, competent personnel.
8. FWRI will support FLMNH in its efforts to obtain new funding for the collections.

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Florida Museum of Natural History

University of Florida
