

**Biodiversity Research and Teaching Collections  
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences**

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**BRTC Loan Policies**

**Specimen loans for research**

1. For scientific research. The BRTC will ship specimens to researchers in the USA or Canada under the following conditions:

a. BRTC receives a formal request addressed to the Curator of the appropriate Division on letterhead stationery explaining 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. Our collection databases are available to search online (BRTC databases and VertNet). Requests made by e-mail (with the formal request on letterhead stationary included as an attachment) are acceptable.

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).

c. In any publications resulting from the use of BRTC specimens, we request that their voucher numbers (BRTC specimen number) be included. The requester agrees to acknowledge the appropriate BRTC Division in publications that use the specimens and to be responsible for sending the BRTC a reprint or PDF of such publications.

d. Loans are normally for a period of 6 months. Requests for extensions of this period should be secured before the loan period is over.

e. We do not send specimens to private individuals or institutions that lack proper facilities for housing specimens.

f. Large requests will be broken up into several shipments, with subsequent shipments dependent on return (in good condition) of previous

shipments. No more than half of a series from a locality will be loaned at a time. If possible, we highly encourage researchers with large requests to visit the BRTC to do their work.

g. Because loans are so costly in terms of processing time, shipping expenses, and insurance, we may ask for reimbursement of these costs if the researcher is not directly associated with an active museum. Unfortunately, we are extremely reluctant to send specimens to countries other than Canada because of the difficulty in safe passage through customs.

2. For scientific illustration: policy same as above, except that we require the illustrator to sign an agreement in advance that includes a guarantee that the BRTC will receive a gratis copy of the book or article in which the illustrations appear.

3. 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.

### **Specimen loans for educational purposes**

1. The BRTC will provide specimens for educational purposes for TAMU courses (e.g., WFSC 302, 401, 402) with the following expectations:

a. It is the responsibility of the course professor to instill in their teaching assistants (TAs) an appreciation for the value of natural history collections and museum specimens. TAs are then responsible for instilling these values in their students prior to laboratory meetings and ultimately responsible for the proper use and care of specimens during laboratory exercises.

b. We are working on building a stand-alone teaching collection. Until that time, we will loan specimens from the research collection to augment what is available in the teaching collection. At the beginning of each semester, the curator will be available for an orientation/primer to the collections designed for TAs. For our records and to avoid conflicts with other courses, we ask that requests for specimens from the research

collection be submitted by the professor of the course a minimum of one week before the specimens are needed (email requests are sufficient). All specimens must be returned immediately when they are no longer needed or at the end of the semester.

c. Requests for any specimen (teaching or research collection) to be taken outside of BRTC (e.g., to main campus) should be submitted by the professor a minimum of one week before the specimens are needed. As with in-house loans, it is the responsibility of the TA to retrieve, properly package, and return all specimens.

### **Information requests**

The BRTC is willing to send information to researchers on label data from specimens and occasionally measurements, provided that 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 letterhead stationery explaining briefly why the data are needed, and how they will be used. An email message 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 co-signed by their advisor. Requests made by e-mail (with the formal request on letterhead stationary included as an attachment) are acceptable.

