

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
DEPARTMENT OF MAMMALOGY

VISITOR GUIDELINES

The Department of Mammalogy has instituted this policy for the protection of the collection and the security of the department in general. We require that all visitors to the collections abide by these guidelines. This will help reduce the risk of pest infestation in the collection, assure its security, and promote the smooth running of the department. Violation of any of these guidelines will result in revocation of visitor privileges.

Hours and Access

The department is open to visitors between 9am and 4pm, Monday through Friday, excluding museum holidays (listed on <https://www.amnh.org/research/vertebrate-zoology/mammalogy/collection-information/visiting-the-collections>). If you will be arriving department after 10am, inform collections staff by email prior to arrival. Before leaving, look around your workspace and make sure it looks the way it did when you arrived. Clear away trash, papers, etc., push in chairs, cover microscopes, and replace carts and rolling stairs. All visitors must clear their workspace and leave the department by 4pm at the latest.

Visiting dates are by appointment only. We can accommodate only a limited number of visitors each day, so we recommend scheduling your visit at least two weeks in advance. To schedule a visit, all visitors must submit a visitor registration form (also available on the department website). Students must provide a letter from their advisor the first time they visit the collections. Only researchers with appropriate credentials will be allowed access to specimens.

All visitors must check in at the 1st floor Security Desk on Central Park West to receive a temporary badge for access to the Mammalogy collections. Visitors must always keep this badge with them during their visit.

Assistants

The department does not allow visitors to bring research assistants with them to work in the Department of Mammalogy without prior approval. Every individual visiting the collection must submit a visitor registration form and be approved before their arrival.

Food and Drink

Visitors may have a re-sealable water bottle with them while working in the collections; no other food or drink is allowed. Visitors will be given access to the staff cafeteria, which is open for breakfast and lunch.

Equipment

Dissecting microscopes and copy stands are available in the department for visitor use. Visitors must bring any other necessary equipment and accessories with them (including calipers, photography scales, and cameras). If you have any equipment related questions, we encourage you to call or email before your visit. For pest control purposes we do not allow organic materials (such as mustard seeds) to be used for volumetric measurements. Please bring glass beads instead.

Chemicals in the Collections

The more than 280,000 specimens in the collections were obtained through the collective efforts of thousands of individual collectors over the course of more than 150 years. Many of these specimens were likely treated with insecticides, including arsenic compounds, but it is impossible for us to know the details of how each specimen was prepared. When working with our collections, we ask that you take appropriate precautions for handling museum specimens. Nitrile gloves are provided at the workstations, and we recommend that you wash your hands frequently, especially before eating or touching your mouth. The yellow boxes in the collection contain a pesticide and should not be handled.

Collection Organization

Specimens are organized systematically, with genera, species, and subspecies (when appropriate) arranged alphabetically within families. Within each nominal taxon specimens are organized alphabetically by locality (country, province, specific locality), and, finally, by descending catalog number.

Handling Specimens

Specimens are irreplaceable and must be treated with extreme care. Visitors may not mark, damage, or alter specimens in any way, even temporarily. Similarly, alteration of the specimen tags or any markings that appear on the specimen boxes and trays is forbidden. Please also avoid using any material that could leave behind a residue. Mammalogy staff will monitor the condition of specimens as they are used.

As skeletal elements are removed and returned to vials, boxes, and trays, it is very important to carefully double check that the number written directly on the element matches the specimen number on the box or vial label.

To prevent the misplacement of specimens, yellow tags are to be used as place markers. Be sure to place yellow tags precisely where specimens or elements of a specimen came from in the drawer. A yellow tag should be placed in the drawer every time a specimen is removed. Fill out each yellow tag completely (see example) and in legible handwriting.

TEMPORARILY REMOVED AMNH MAMMALOLOGY	AMNH No(s) <u>54356</u>	DATE <u>1 Sep 2018</u>
	TAXON <u>Gorilla gorilla gorilla</u>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> SKIN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SKULL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SKELETON <input type="checkbox"/> ALCOHOLIC	
	LOANED TO <u>John Smith</u>	BY <u>Staff</u>

Yellow tags are removed only after the specimen is returned to its original place. At the end of the day, bring all used yellow tags to the collections staff. These tags will be used to verify that specimens were returned properly. If the collection space you are working in does not have or runs out of yellow tags, collections staff can provide you with more.

Specimen cases are to be kept closed and latched unless specimens are actively being removed or replaced. This should never be for more than a minute or two. Specimens removed from the cases are not to be left unattended or out overnight. Do not remove entire drawers from the cabinet or entire trays from the drawer. Collections staff will provide you with carts and trays for transporting specimens. Do not remove more than 5 large specimens or 10 small specimens at a time.

Reporting

Visitors are asked to report any signs of pest infestation, broken cabinets, or other damage to specimens or specimen housings to a Mammalogy staff member. We ask that visitors who find misplaced elements or misidentifications bring the issue to the attention of Mammalogy staff, without attempting to remove the specimen from the collection, and without making any corrections. Do not leave notes in the collection or correct problems on your own.

Evacuation Procedure and Safety

In the event of a museum emergency, listen for and follow the instructions broadcast over the security loudspeakers. In case of an evacuation, the designated meeting point for Mammalogy staff and visitors is at the corner of 77th Street and Columbus Avenue. Once there, report to a staff member wearing an orange safety vest. If you are asked to evacuate, please do not worry about specimens or equipment, and leave the department immediately. If you experience an emergency, call security by dialing 2222 from a museum phone. If you call 911 directly, it is advisable to also notify security so that they can help coordinate the fastest response.