

Collection Use Guidelines

McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity, Florida Museum of Natural History

The McGuire Center houses one of the world's most important collections of Lepidoptera, and is utilized by an increasing number of students and researchers every year. In order to ensure the long-term preservation of the specimens under our care, please adhere to these guidelines when using the collections or areas in the collection rooms.

General

Our biggest challenge is to keep the collections pest-free. The climate controlled rooms make this possible, but additional care is needed to avoid creating an environment that may encourage pest species. Therefore, **no food** is allowed in the collection rooms. Beverages are permitted in the collection rooms only in a **spill-proof** container (at least must have a lid or cap top). Avoid bringing unnecessary **clothing or bags** (backpacks, etc.) into the collections whenever possible, to avoid unintended transport of pests.

Any specimens brought into the collection must be **fumigated or frozen** (72 hrs. at -20C or 24 hrs. at -80C) ahead of time. Exceptions may include specimens kept in well fumigated drawers but **must be inspected** by the Collection Manager or Coordinator of Collections first.

The main floor collection room receives by far more traffic than other floors, and it is often used as a hallway. This is of particular concern given its proximity to the rearing lab. **Please avoid entering** the main floor collection room unless you are accessing the collection.

Because of the large number of collection users, it is important that everybody **cleans up** his or her work space after working in the collections. Please don't leave empty drawers, unit trays, stray labels, etc. in work spaces. Return scissors, forceps, pins and other curatorial supplies to the site where you found them when finished; some of these items are personal property meant for common use. If you need to keep equipment (e.g., books, photographic devices, etc.) in a collection room for an extended period, please coordinate this with the Collection Manager or Coordinator of Collections.

When moving drawers, carry them slowly with **two hands** or a cart; always watch your step in the collections, as extension cords or cables on the floor present a real hazard. When removing drawer lids, place the lid under the drawer, to make sure the correct lid is kept with each drawer. Drawer lids are not interchangeable between drawers. Please keep track of the front and back of each drawer lid when removing-replacing, since drawer lids often don't fit correctly if replaced backwards.

Compactors

While our open-face compactor units provide the convenience of not having to deal with cabinet doors, they present several challenges. The biggest of these is keeping drawers from slowly inching out of a secure position as compactor units are repeatedly moved. Until we are able to secure each drawer from moving (this can be done with Velcro tabs), we need to take great care to minimize movement of drawers and avoid having opposing drawer handles meet (this leads to broken drawers

and specimens, and it happens about once a year). The **wooden blocks** on the floor in most aisles are there to provide extra distance between compactor units, please **do not remove** them.

When moving compactor aisles, please **move only one aisle at a time**. Make sure there are no people or open drawers in the aisle you are closing, and make sure no drawers have inched out of place and could become interlocked with an opposing drawer handle as the units meet. As soon as you begin to open the adjacent aisle, make sure no drawer handles are interlocked. Most importantly, very slowly ease the moving compactor unit to a stop; if the compactor bumps the adjacent unit upon stopping, drawers will be jostled out of place.

Even with great care, some drawer movement takes place when compactors are moved, so, as you are working in the collection, whenever you see drawers that have inched out of place, in any aisle you are working in, please push them back to a secure position.

Specimens

Since our institution is so new, the level of curation is highly variable within and between any given family. Some groups are well-curved, while others are in dire need of attention and resources. We encourage all collection users to help with the process of curation, in coordination with the Collection Manager, Coordinator of Collections or a Curator.

Please use great care when removing specimens from drawers. Take special care not to break adjacent specimens with the label of the specimen you are moving. Frequently, specimens that are loose on their pin will be secured in the drawer with **brace pins**, immediately in front of each forewing or against the sides of the abdomen. Remove the brace pins before attempting to remove the specimen from the drawer, and when replacing the specimen back into the drawer, make sure the brace pins are replaced securely against the specimen.

When **replacing specimens** back into a drawer, please try to put them back exactly as they were before, in the same spot, with wings at the same angle, and pinned securely into the pinning substrate (take care not to break legs or abdomens hanging unusually low). In some cases, drawers may be packed very tight, with specimens closely shingled. Special care is needed in these cases to avoid breakage of specimens, and it may be necessary to expand specimens into an additional drawer in order to avoid breakage. Please do this in consultation with the Collection Manager, Coordinator of Collections, or a curator.

If a specimen or species is **moved** out of its established order, for whatever reason, please leave a note in the unit tray indicating where it was moved to and why it was moved.

Specimen are most commonly removed from their drawers for **photography**. Take special care when removing labels from specimens, so that legs or other body parts are not broken. Please use flat-tipped forceps when removing labels, and use existing pin holes when replacing labels- avoid making a new pin hole.

When adding **determination labels**, please don't ever remove other workers' labels, but add your own below the older one(s). Please make sure your name and the year's date are on the label you affix, so later visitors will know whose label was added and when.

Never leave specimens sitting out when you are not working with them. When leaving the room for whatever reason, always put specimens back into drawers and replace drawer lids.

In the case of an **accident** resulting in a broken specimen, please consult the Collection Manager, Coordinator of Collections, a Curator, or other supervising staff member to determine the best way to repair or preserve the broken parts. Most often, broken parts should be placed in gelatin capsules and affixed to the specimen's pin.

Loans

Loans may be issued by the Collection Manager, Coordinator of Collections, or a Curator. That said, we always encourage researchers to personally visit if at all possible, since they will benefit from being able to examine far more specimens than through a loan. All loans are subject to our Destructive Sampling Policy.