The practice of clearing and staining small vertebrates is widespread in the
study of morphology and systematics. Such techniques are generally
employed in the evaluation of skeletal characteristics but, if fresh material
is available, they can be augmented by the treatment of certain soft
anatomical systems. The injection of the circulatory system with Microfil'
and the subsequent examination of the topography of the component
vessels, either by way of clearing and staining or by radiography is one
approach. We outline the method by which such injections are achieved
and provide details of the visualization of the circulatory system and its
relationship to skeletal elements and nerves. The method can be applied to
specimens of a relatively small size. Once injected and cured the medium
is stable and specimens may be stored in alcohol for extended periods
and need not be cleared immediately.

BIOMASS LOSS IN WET-PRESERVED REFERENCE
COLLECTIONS
D. V. ELLIS
Department of Biology, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2

Specimens of invertebrate and vertebrate animals held in liquid
preservatives present a subtle problem for future use in ecological
research. Where there is possibility that such future use involve weighing
specimens for estimates of biomass and ecosystem indices, certain
procedures would increase the value of the reference collections. The
problem arises from the rate of leaching of materials from the specimens,
 hence loss of weight, which is usually a function of type of preservative
and duration of storage. Specimens commonly are fixed in neutralized
formalin and transferred after a few days to alcohol of various
concentrations. Quality controlling this leaching effect is so inadequate at
the moment that biomass productivity estimators generally will not accept
values derived from preserved specimens. Adoption of standardized
procedures for quality control would increase the value of wet-preserved
specimens for long term retroactive analysis of ecosystem productivity
changes based on reference collections in museums. It is suggested that
museum records include original (wet weight) biomass values, a record of
preservatives, dates and adequate quality control of preservative
concentration, for sets of specimens held.
IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PLASTIC DISPLAY JARS FOR MUSEUMS
G. W. LYONS
Department of Anatomy, Queen's University, Kingston ON K7L 3N6

Due to increased cost of materials over the last few years it has become increasingly more important to develop methods of constructing museum jars and displaying anatomical materials in an inexpensive manner. A method of constructing plastic display jars from transparent plexiglass is described. The design and construction of a simple bending jig containing a solid rod heating bar has simplified this task. The resulting product offers versatility in size and function. This may be accomplished at low cost from readily available materials.

"CASED" BIRD SKINS - AN ALTERNATE OPENING INCISION
S. A. HALFORD
Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC V5A 1 S6

In the preparation of ornithological study skins, an opening incision running from each thigh to the vent - similar to that used to prepare a 'cased' mammal skin - is useful. This method reduce the risk of stretching, possible tearing of the skin, and restoring the lay of breast feathers. This method will be particularly useful for pattern-breasted and long-legged specimens.

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Zoological Collection Incunabula: The Wied Brazilian Collection
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