

AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE DIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTER

DESTRUCTIVE SAMPLING POLICY

Philosophy

The Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center (ARDRC) is dedicated to maximizing the intellectual use of its collections. For instances where the research requires irreparable modification (“destructive use”) of specimens, the ARDRC considers how the potential scientific impact of such a use will compare to the integrity of the collection.

Overview

Because each destructive sampling request is unique, with various potential benefits and drawbacks associated with it, the ARDRC curators will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. When considering a destructive sampling request, the knowledge to be gained from the destructive act will be weighed against the loss of future knowledge caused by the act. The requester will be required to justify the use of destructive sampling in light of these criteria.

Non-Negotiable Criteria

Under no circumstances will destructive sampling be allowed:

1. On holotypes, paratypes, or paratype series.
2. On species for which the ARDRC has limited material.
3. On species where it is unlikely that additional specimens will ever be procured (e.g. extinct, endangered, or rare species). The curators will judge the rarity of specimens.
4. If other non-destructive methodologies, regardless of the funding available to pursue such methods, can provide the same or comparable data.
5. If the requester has no or little experience with the proposed technique.
6. If the curators deem that destructively sampling the specimens unnecessarily repeats prior work.

Guidelines

To request the destructive use of specimens from the ARDRC, please provide a brief (1-2 page) proposal with the following information:

1. Specimens to be used.
2. Brief description of the research.

3. Detailed description of the destructive methods to be used.
4. A justification of destructive sampling. Successful requests will address all of the following points:
 - a. Level of experience in using the destructive technique.
 - b. Will this work result in a meaningful, published contribution to the scientific community?
 - c. How does destructively sampling this specimen(s) contribute in a unique way to our understanding of biology (organismal, evolutionary, ecological)?
 - d. An explanation as to why other (non-destructive) methods are not sufficient to obtain the data.
5. Include the following statement: "I, <your name>, commit to using the specimen(s) as described in the proposal. I will return all specimen derivatives from the use of the specimen (histological slides, stomach contents, skin/viscera, CT scans, etc.) to the ARDRC along with the specimen."
6. If you are a graduate student or postdoctoral researcher, your supervisor must provide the following statement: "I, <supervisor's name>, approve of this research and of the methodologies described in the proposal and will take responsibility for the proper use of the specimens and their return to the ARDRC."
7. Your signature and the signature of your supervisor if you are a graduate student or postdoctoral researcher.

Please be aware that the curators will also take into account:

- The ability of the requester to successfully carry out the proposed procedure and study in a timely fashion (this includes a researcher's prior loan history).
- Number of specimens of that species/sex/life stage/locality/date that are currently contained in the UTA collection and at other institutions.
- Likelihood that additional specimens with those characteristics will be collected in the future.
- The amount and type of damage caused by the proposed technique and how this may affect the specimen's utility for other methods/measurements.

The curators will consider your request and will follow up with questions if necessary.