



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1 March, 1983

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF NPS NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM LABELS

By : Jonathan Bayless
NPS, WASO

The following Museum specimen labels for NPS natural history collections are available from the Division of Museum Services, Harpers Ferry Center.

<u>NPS FORM #</u>	<u>Label type</u>	<u>Height by width * (inches)</u>
10-500	Vetebrate Wet Specimen Label	3 X 5
10-501	Vertebrate Specimen Label	$3/4$ X $3 \frac{1}{4}$
10-502	Skull Vial or Box Label	$3/4$ X $2 \frac{1}{2}$
10-503	Invertebrate Specimen Label	3 X 5
10-504	Geology Collection	3 X 2
10-505	Paleontology Label	$2 \frac{3}{4}$ X 4
10-506	Wet Plant Specimen Label	3 X 5
10-507	Invertebrate Label	$1 \frac{3}{4}$ X $2 \frac{1}{2}$
10-508	Egg Box Label	$1 \frac{3}{4}$ X $2 \frac{1}{2}$
10-509	Insect Label	$1/2$ X $1 \frac{1}{2}$
10-510	Annotation Label	$1 \frac{1}{4}$ X 4
10-511	Mineral Collection	$3 \frac{1}{2}$ X 2
10-512	Herbarium Collection	3 X 5

* Dimensions important when considering box, jar, vial, or paper size to use with each label

OBJECTIVES

These are the major justifications for the use of NPS museum labels:

- 1) Proof of Accuracy - labels provide the data that is essential for the specimen to have value for scientific reasons (which covers NPS uses also). It has been said that the label is more important than the specimen itself. While this may not be true, it emphasizes that without accurate data, the specimen cannot be used as a record. Future users will have to judge the authenticity of the specimen's data by the label and consistency here is very important.
- 2) Completeness of data - NPS labels are formatted in an attempt to insure that the maximum amount of data is recorded to ensure usefulness of the specimen at a later date. Labels have various formats because different types of data are recorded for different types of specimens.
- 3) Access to data - labels give the user ready access to the majority of data most users require. This benefits the user by not having to refer to other records and helps to reduce the handling of permanent records such as the catalog cards.
- 4) Link to all records - labels provide a link between the accession record, catalog, and other files concerning the specimen.
- 5) Property identification - labels clearly identify specimens as U.S. government property which is useful for purposes of thefts, temporary loans, and for tracing specimens which leave the park and are deposited in other institutions (eg. museums).

TECHNIQUES

SPECIMEN

ATTACHMENT: These labels are attached or associated with the specimens in the following manners. Note that some labels may be attached in more than one way. NEVER REMOVE OR DESTROY OLDER LABEL ; if prior label cannot be maintained on specimen (Damage or lack of space) put old label with Catalog file and note fact on new label.

GLUED

on box jar paper

Vertebrate Wet Specimen Label
Skull Vial or Box Label
Invertebrate Specimen Label
Geology Collection
Paleontology Label
Wet Plant Specimen Label
Invertebrate label
Annotation label
Mineral Collection
Herbarium Collection

ENCLOSED in

box jar vial

Skull Vial or Box Label
Geology Collection
Paleontology Label
Invertebrate Label
Egg Box Label
Insect Label
Mineral Collection

TIED with string
on Specimen

Vertebrate Specimen Label
Annotation Label

PINNED down

Insect Label

GLUE: A wide range of glues can be used to fix labels on jars and boxes. Avoid starchy paste type glues as they are more susceptible to mold and insect attack. Do not use "Model airplane" type glues with toluene or acetone bases.

UNIT OF

LABELING: All labels are to be used for a single specimen with the following exceptions:

(1) VETEbrate WET SPECIMEN LABEL (10-500), INVERTEBRATE SPECIMEN LABEL (10-503), and INVERTEBRATE LABEL (10-507) have a space for the number of specimens and can be used on jars containing specimens of the same species where all the specimens have the same collection data. The data must pertain to the same collecting locality, date of collection and collected by.

(2) EGG BOX LABEL (10-508) is to be used for all the eggs in a clutch from a single nest. Each egg, and the nest if present, is given the same catalog number.

INK: Use only a permanent, waterproof black ink. The following are recommended-
 India Ink
 Pelikan Drawing Ink
 Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Ink
 Higgins Eternal Black Ink

The last two inks are especially recommended for labels to be immersed in preservative fluids such as alcohol or formaldehyde. Pencil is recommended for the scientific name of the genus and species.

PEN: Simplest is a staff pen and fine tip point that is dipped into the ink. For large jobs or frequent use any of various models of Rapidograph pens with tip size 1 or smaller are convenient but require greater maintenance in the form of regular cleaning.

LETTERING: Consistency of lettering forms is important for future interpretation or problems. A preferred method in many museums is to use all capital lettering forms as in: PEROMYCUS LEUCOPUS

5 MI. NORTH WESTLAND

However, because of the natural tendency to use lower case letters many adopt a lower case form: Peromyscus leucopus

5 Mi. North Westland

The situation to avoid is a mixture of different styles that comes from setting no standards, NEVER:

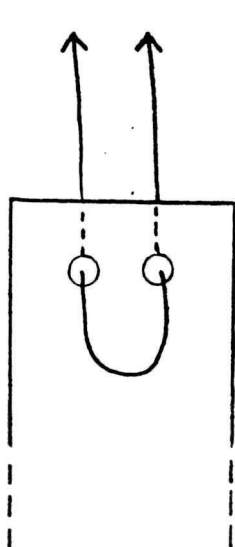
PEROMYCUS Leucopus

5 MI North Westland

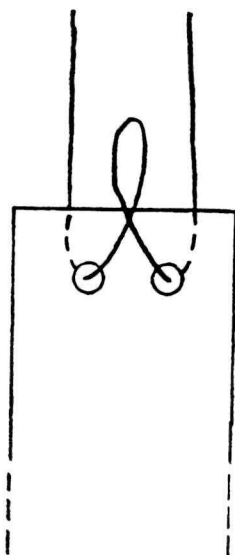
INSECT

LABEL: For insect labels use non-rusting pins. An additional hand-cut label or two, smaller than the NPS label, recording the locality, collection date and collector will be necessary. The labels are positioned underneath the insect on the pin facing up.

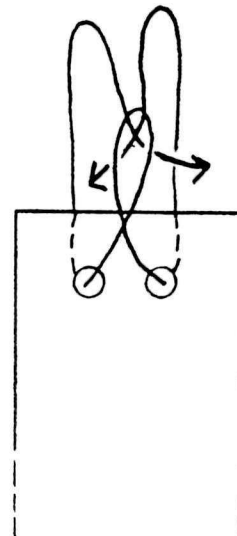
STRING: Tie the VERTEBRATE SPECIMEN LABEL (10-501) Or ANNOTATION LABEL (10-510) onto a specimen using mercurized cotton thread (number 8) or heavy linen thread. Be sure not to use thread that is too thin. Start with lengths of 14 inches and tie in the following manner :



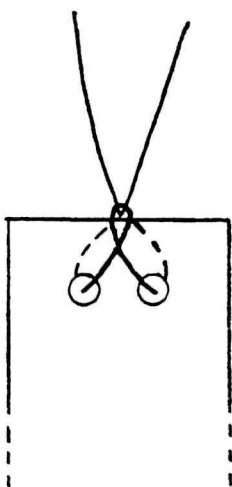
Put each end of string through holes in label



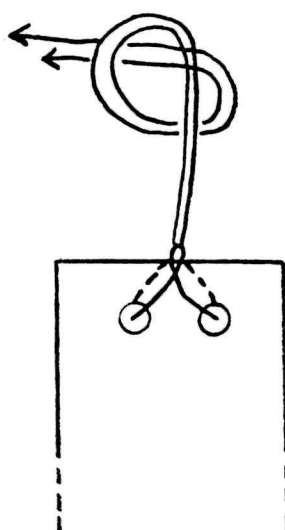
Create loop



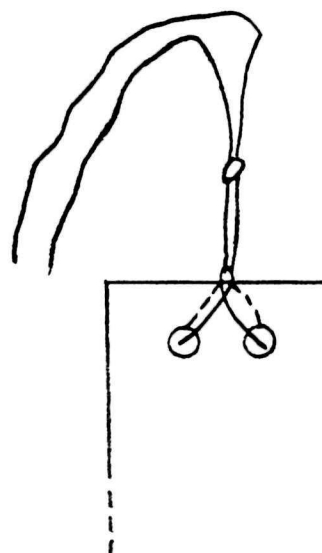
Pass ends of string through loop



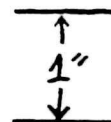
Pull string tight and close loop



Tie overhand knot in string with 1 inch between knot and label



Finish label - note approx. 5 inch string after knot



Index to Label Data

A.O.U. No.	The American Ornithological Union number given to each species of bird in the United States.
Acc.	The name on the person who accessioned the mineral specimen. Optional use with valuable specimens.
Acc. No.	The museum's Accession number of the specimen.
Age	The age of the specimen if known. This can be in days, months and/or years or in commonly used categories as Adult, Hatching Year, Calf, etc.
Cat. No.	The museum's Catalog number of the specimen.
Coll. by	The Name of the person that actually collected the specimen. If different from the person who prepares the specimen note so on the label. (See also <u>Prepared by</u>) This is important because if the specimen becomes an important record the accuracy of the collection locality may be verified or refuted on the basis of who collected it.
Common Name	The common name of a specimen for convenience of use. Try to use names published in widely used field guides instead of local names.
Date	Usually the date of collection unless it follows a prompt for the name of the person that identified the specimen (see <u>Ident.by</u>). Do Not use numerical abbreviations such as 6-4-83 because the english and american methods of reading the month and day are the reverse of each other and can create confusion. Use the format of writing out the abbreviation of the month and the full year. Ex: 5 Dec 1983 Months: Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec
Date Coll.	The date the specimen was collected (see also <u>Date</u>).
Donor	The name of the person who donated the specimen in the case of a mineral collection. Note: Minerals are often useful even when not collected in the region of the park as they help with identification and interpretation of specimens from the park.
Elevation	The elevation above sea level in feet or meters where the specimen was collected.
Family	The name of the taxon at the family level of classification if known. Use pencil since classifications may change.
Fm.	Abbreviation for (see) Formation.
Formation	The name of the geological formation the specimen occurred in.

Genus	The scientific name of the genus always capitalized, this and the species and subspecies can be written in pencil as these names change or the identification could have been incorrect at the time of cataloging.
Group	Optional line to include appropriate taxonomic categories above the family level if known. Use pencil since classifications may change.
Habitat	The specific term(s) describing the collection habitat.
Ident.	The name of the person who identified the taxonomic name for the specimen.
Ident. by	The name of the person who identified the taxonomic name for the specimen.
Incu.	The state of Incubation in the egg when collected such as "Little, Moderate, or Heavy".
Loc.	Abbreviation for (see) <u>Locality</u> .
Locality	The collection locality in the order: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Direction from nearest town or major landmark. Always give distance North-South and East-West from point: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Example: 5.3 km. N , 19.0 km. W of Westland</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><u>NEVER</u>: use intermediate compass points (NW,NE,SE,SW)</p> 2) Name of County 3) State
Measurements	Any of various body dimensions measured before the animal is preserved, e.g. in mammals (1) Total Length (2) Tail L (3) Right Hind Foot L (4) Right Ear L is the standard order of measurements in millimeters written as: 201-88-34-19.
Mine	The name of the excavated mine in which a specimen was obtained.
Name	On GEOLOGY COLLECTION or MINERAL COLLECTION labels, the identification of the specimen. On INVERTEBRATE LABEL, the scientific name of the specimen composed of the generic and specific names.
No. Spec.	Abbreviation for (see) <u>No. Specimens</u> .
No. Specimens	The number of specimens contained in a box or jar. See <u>Unit of Labeling</u> under techniques section.
Notes	Any of various comments or data that the labeler may chose to include. Additional locality information, the color of a birds legs, or the disposition of records are examples.

Orig. Fix.	Abbreviation for (see) <u>Original Fixative</u> .
Original Fixative	The original fixative that was used to fix the specimen, this can be the actual ingredients and amounts (ie. 75 ml Picric Acid, 20 ml Formalin, 5 ml Glacial Acetic Acid) or a recognized formula name (ie. Bouin's Fluid).
Park Code	The NPS number for the park in which the specimen was collected or originally cataloged if collected outside the park.
Period	The geological time period the specimen occurred in.
Phylum	The name of the specimens' taxon at the Phylum level.
Pk. Code	Abbreviation for (see) <u>Park Code</u> .
Prepared by	The name of the person who did the original specimen preparation.
Pres.	Abbreviation for (see) <u>Preservative</u> .
Preservative	The preservative the specimen is stored in, this can be the actual ingredients (ie. 30 ml Water, 70 ml Isopropyl Alcohol) or a recognized formula name (ie. 70% Isopropyl Alcohol).
Set Mark	The field or collectors mark for the set of eggs, often given in the form : 349-3/4 : where 349 sets of eggs have been collected and these three were collected out of a total of 4 eggs in the nest.
Sex	The sex of the specimen, Male or Female or unknown. May be written as ♂ or ♀ or ?.
Species	The scientific name of the species always uncapitalized, this and the genus and subspecies can be written in pencil as these names change or the identification could have been incorrect at the time of cataloging.
Subspecies	The scientific name of the subspecies always uncapitalized, this and the genus and species can be written in pencil as these names change or the identification could have been incorrect at the time of cataloging.
Taxon	Optional line to include appropriate taxonomic category above the Family level (eg. Order or Class) for certain invertebrates. Identify the taxonomic category before giving the name. Ex. Order: Hymenoptera Class: Gastropoda
Technical name	The genus and species name of the specimen. See <u>genus</u> and <u>species</u> .