

Role Description: Bird Collections volunteer

9.2022

Overview

The Field Museum Bird Collection houses over 100,000 bird skeletons, making it one of the largest bird skeleton collections in the world. Each year the lab receives roughly five thousand birds that die hitting windows in Chicago during migration. The bulk of these specimens is incorporated into the skeleton collection. Due to the pandemic shutdown, we have a large backlog of material to process.

Position Description

Volunteers will primarily be responsible for the cleaning of bird bones after they have been processed by the dermestid beetles, as well as sorting, boxing, and labeling. The cleaning process basically involves rinsing the bones, using tweezers to remove any remaining small bits of feathers, dead dermestid beetles, or other debris, then laying the bones out on trays to dry before they are boxed.

Volunteer qualifications

- Detail oriented.
- Excellent organizational skills.
- Ability to work with skeletal remains of animals without being squeamish.
- Manual Dexterity- Ability to use fine forceps to sort very small bones.

Hours and time commitment

- One four-hour shift per week, during regular weekday business hours of 10am-5pm.
- A minimum time commitment of one four-hour shift per week for 6 months is required. Volunteers available for a long-term commitment of 8 months to one year are given priority upon placement.

Education/Experience

- High School Graduate.
- Must have an interest in birds or natural history collections, but no prior experience required.