



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: JULY 22, 2026**

FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: RECOMMEND DEACCESSION FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF TWO (2) BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS (A996-67), ONE (1) COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD (A1656-44), AND A COLLECTION OF ANIMAL BONES (A198-1 AND A198-2).

ISSUE:

To recommend to City Council to approve deaccession from the permanent collection of two (2) Brewer's blackbirds (A996-67), one (1) Costa's hummingbird (A1656-44), and a collection of animal bones (A198-1 and A 198-2) from the permanent collection.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that City Council approves deaccession from the permanent collection of two (2) Brewer's blackbirds (A996-67), one (1) Costa's hummingbird (A1656-44), and a collection of animal bones (A198-1 and A 198-2) from the permanent collection.

BACKGROUND:

The Brewer's blackbird specimens (A996-67) (one male and one female) are life-mounted specimens purchased by the Museum in 1970. They were exhibited from 1993-2003 as part of a backyard birds exhibition. Since that time, however, they have suffered irreversible damage from dermestid beetles (as evidenced by a large number of casings found in the plastic bag in which they are currently stored), to the point where the specimens are unstable to handle and are shedding feathers. They are beyond conservation and are best deaccessioned and disposed of. Per United States Fish and Wildlife regulations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act these specimens must be incinerated.

The Costa's hummingbird (A1656-44) was never exhibited but has suffered much the same fate. Already half of the body is missing, and dermestid damage and subsequent feather shedding are extensive. This specimen is unstable and beyond salvage. It is recommended to be incinerated with the Brewer's blackbird specimens above.

Both species of birds mentioned above are already well-represented in the permanent collection with many study skin and life-mount specimens in better condition from similar spatiotemporal periods, thus, the scientific value of the collection will not be impacted by the deaccession of these specimens.

The assortment of animal bones (A198-1 and A 198-2) was donated by Mrs. A. W. Stitt who may have led, or at least interacted with, Brownie Scout Troop #59. It is likely that one of the Scouts discovered and collected this assortment of animal bones on a scouting trip and they were later donated to the Museum. These specimens are of little scientific value as they have no corresponding data. As they remain in good condition, they do have use in the Museum's prop collection.

DISCUSSION:

The term "deaccession" refers to the procedure of formally removing an object from a museum's permanent collection, after which the object may be considered for sale, exchange, gift, transfer to another entity, transfer to a collection other than the permanent collection, or – in the case of irretrievably deteriorated objects – disposal.

To "accession" an object is the process of including it formally in a museum's permanent collection, which is the category of collection for which the greatest effort will be made to preserve the object in perpetuity and document it fully.

The bird specimens are beyond salvage and are redundant given the other conspecifics (organisms of the same species) collected at similar time periods and locations throughout the permanent collections. They cannot be exhibited and serve little use as either collections or educational objects.

The collection of bones has little scientific value. They are in good condition, however, and could be of use in future displays and interpretation with the Museum. They are hard-wearing and well-suited to be used for prop display or to be handled by the public.

They specifically fulfill the Museum's Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies deaccession criterion of having doubtful potential utilization in the near future in the Museum's exhibition and public programs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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Two (2) Brewer's blackbirds (A996-67) 44)



One (1) Costa's hummingbird (A1656-44)



One collection of bones (A198-1 and A198-2)