



City of Arts & Innovation

Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: JANUARY 25, 2023**

FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF THIRTY (30) PREPARED BIRD SPECIMENS

ISSUE:

To approve a recommendation to accession into the permanent collection of thirty (30) prepared bird specimens.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of thirty (30) prepared bird specimens.

BACKGROUND:

Over many years, the Museum of Riverside (Museum) accumulated a large number of frozen animal specimens that were eventually meant to be preserved for use in the permanent natural history collection or education collection. As the years passed, many of these specimens became so damaged from prolonged freezing that it recently became essential to determine which were still viable. The first round of this process of assessing the frozen specimens focused on the birds. Freezing specimens immediately upon acquisition aids in preservation and eliminates pests. Of the birds, those still suitable for professional preparation were selected and sent to a license taxidermist who was able to salvage thirty (30) of the specimens.

At its meeting on August 10, 2022, the Museum of Riverside's Collections Committee unanimously supported the recommendation to accession the thirty (30) bird specimens.

DISCUSSION:

The Museum's Collections Development Plan outlines several aspects for targeted growth for the natural history collections, one of which is expansion of the bird collection. The aim is to increase the number and types of species in the collections, specifically focusing on those species native to Southern California. All of the specimens listed below are species native to

our region, with most of the specimens coming from the City of Riverside. Most of them have complete collection data, such as age, sex, location, and date of collection. Collection data makes them scientifically far more valuable.

Accession of these specimens would further the collection development goal and would constitute a much-needed increase in the diversity and quality of our bird specimens. Moreover, these are prepared as “study skins,” which occupy less collections storage space and are useful for investigative and educational purposes, unlike the “life mounts” used in exhibitions. The image below is a sampling from this group.

Red-shouldered hawk (2)	Western screech owl (4)
Greater roadrunner (1)	Golden-crowned sparrow (1)
Northern flicker (1)	Yellow-rumped warbler (2)
Western meadowlark (1)	Cedar waxwing (1)
Black-throated gray warbler (1)	House finch (1)
Ruby-crowned kinglet (1)	Allen's hummingbird (1)
Western tanager (1)	Rufous hummingbird (1)
Townsend's warbler (2)	California scrub jay (1)
Red-breasted sapsucker (1)	Bufflehead (1)
Hermit thrush (1)	Cooper's hawk (1)
Great horned owl (1)	Sharp-shinned hawk (1)
Barn owl (2)	

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority, “Arts, Culture and Recreation” and in particular goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside’s portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

Museum programs further support the Strategic Priority, “Community Well-Being.” Specific goals supported by Museum programs and partnerships include goal 2.3, which includes strengthening neighborhood identities, and goal 2.5, which points to fostering relationships between community members and partner organizations.

1. **Community Trust** – The Museum’s Collections Committee is composed of Museum staff, Museum Board members, and members of the Riverside community. Strengthening the Museum’s collections in accordance with the Museum’s Collection Development Plan and with the involvement of community members builds community trust and supports the Museum’s mission.
2. **Equity** – New collection resources enrich the stories that the Museum can tell across all neighborhoods through exhibitions and programs that are offered equitably. This includes stories about the varied natural and backyard environments that exist across Riverside.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – These proposed new accessions came to the Museum by donation and pose minimal demands on current storage and recordkeeping resources.

4. **Innovation** – New accessions into the Museum’s permanent collection expand the diversity and flexibility of collection resources, enabling more programming options.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Strengthening the Museum’s collections in accordance with the Museum’s Collection Development Plan, collection management policies, and mission enhances the City’s ability to preserve Riverside’s history for the future in a considered and judicious manner.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager

