


Austin Peay
State University
Biology

26 January 2017

Dear Dr. Joseph Cook,

We are writing to formally request several voucher specimens from the Museum of Southwestern Biology. We are both undergraduate students in the Department of Biology at Austin Peay State University working through the Snyder Museum of Zoology under the advisement of Dr. Jason Malaney.

For our undergraduate senior thesis project, we propose to use morphological analyses to 1) reassess morphological variation and 2) test competing hypotheses of ecogeographic variation. More specifically, we plan to use morphometric analyses to test geographic variation across several morphological characters to reassess the taxonomic classifications of red squirrels (Genus *Tamiasciurus*) considering genetic data questions the validity of these definitions (Hope et al. 2016). We will be using calipers to measure various skull characters of any loaned specimens that will not undergo any destructive sampling. This technique is often used to help resolve taxonomic discrepancies in mammals and can be useful for understanding factors that contribute to ecogeographic variation.

We are requesting 277 *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* skulls from the Museum of Southwestern Biology. Because this research requires comprehensive taxon sampling, the specimens being requested provide a subset of localities needed for this study and we are requesting specimens from several collections. In general, our protocols require several specimens from each county, and we require intact, adult skulls. Attached is an Excel file containing a list of specimens that we obtained from VertNet. If any of the requested skulls are deemed inappropriate (*i.e.*, juvenile, damaged), we are happy to work with you or your collections manager to find a suitable replacement.

We anticipate approximately eight weeks to measure the specimens from your museum, which we will promptly return. Specimens will be stored in proper museum conditions, with access available only to our advisor, Dr. Jason Malaney. Any specimens loaned will be properly documented in a “specimens examined” section of resultant publications and you and the museum will be properly acknowledged.

Thank you for considering this loan for this important research.

Sincerely,

Alexis Hill

Samantha O'Connor

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