



Journal of Natural Science Collections: Guidelines for authors

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Aims and scope

The *Journal of Natural Science Collections* is published once a year. It is a place for those working with these collections to share projects and practices that will benefit the museum community. The *Journal* represents all areas of work with natural science collections, and includes articles on best practice and latest research across disciplines, including conservation, curation, learning, and exhibitions. Articles should be relevant and accessible to our diverse membership. All submissions are peer reviewed, resulting in high quality articles.

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Preparing your manuscript

Articles should not normally exceed 8,000 words.

Title

The title should concisely describe the nature of the article, and not include abbreviations.

Authors

NatSCA is a registered charity ([No. 1098156](#)) run by volunteers elected from our membership.

List all authors and their institutional affiliations, using numerical superscript where necessary to clearly indicate the relationships between names and institutions.

One author must be designated as the corresponding author, and their full postal address and email address listed. This person is the primary contact for the Editor and readers.

Abstract

The abstract should concisely summarise the article, in no more than 300 words. If you are unsure what should be included, please see this guide to writing an effective abstract: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/docs/learningguide-writinganabstract.pdf>

Keywords

Provide up to ten specific keywords, separated by commas. Please keep online search engines in mind; effective keywords will increase the findability of your article.

Main body

Articles should be divided into clearly labelled sections, with appropriate headings. For technical manuscripts, the usual headings are:

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

For descriptive articles, this structure might not be appropriate. Please use concise headings that fit best.

The *Journal* can accommodate up to three levels of headings, to be formatted as follows:

- Heading: Bold text, left-aligned, only initial word and proper nouns capitalised, no full-stop.
- Sub-heading: Italic text, left aligned, only first word and proper nouns capitalised, no full-stop.
- Sub-sub-heading: Regular text, left aligned and indented with a single tab, only first word and proper nouns capitalised, no full-stop.

Acknowledgements

Include Acknowledgements after the main text, and before References. Any individuals or organisations who contributed to the research or preparation of the manuscript should be acknowledged. All sources of funding and/or conflicting interests should also be declared here (see [Conflicts of interest and funding](#)).

References

NatSCA is a registered charity ([No. 1098156](#)) run by volunteers elected from our membership.

The Journal uses the Harvard referencing system. All sources should be cited within the text and included in the reference list. This includes websites, archival documents, and personal communications.

Please follow the formatting in the Anglia Ruskin University Library's '*Guide to Harvard style of Referencing*' (<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>). Feel free to contact the Editor if you need any advice or assistance with formatting references.

Footnotes are not accepted.

Appendices

Appendices may be included, containing tables or figures too large to fit in the main body of the manuscript, raw data tables, or supplementary information. Appendices should be clearly labelled, using consecutive Roman numerals. Appendices should be referred to in brackets within the text, e.g. '(see Appendix I)'.

Style and language

All articles should be written in UK Standard English, in language that can be understood by a wide audience (see the Plain English Campaign website for further guidance on this: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>). Technical terms should be explained. If you think your manuscript would benefit from proof-reading prior to submission, please contact the Editor (editor@natsca.org) for advice.

A standard sans-serif font (e.g. Arial, Calibri) should be used, at a size of 10-12 point. Formatting is largely unimportant, as this will be standardised during the layout stage prior to publication.

Abbreviations should be written out in full on first use. After this, the abbreviation can be used in place of the full name, e.g. 'Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA)' on first use, then just 'NatSCA'.

Scientific names should be in italics. Full binomials should be used in the title and on first use within the text (e.g. *Homo sapiens* Linnaeus, 1758). Thereafter, the genus name can be abbreviated (e.g. *H. sapiens*), provided this won't cause confusion with other genera. On first use, the authority and date should also be cited (as in the example above).

The International System of Units (SI units) should be used throughout. Where other types of measurement are necessary, include their SI equivalent in brackets.

Specimen citation

All museum specimens referred to should be cited with their accession number, prefixed by the unique five-letter MDA Code that identifies the institution (or the local equivalent, for non-UK collections). Example: LDHRN-NH.H.44 refers to the taxidermy walrus (NH.H.44) held at the Horniman Museum and Gardens (LDHRN).

Please also identify all holding institutions and their MDA codes (or equivalents), either within the body of the text or in a list (e.g. 'Specimens used in this study are held at the following institutions: Horniman Museum and Gardens (LDHRN), Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OXFUM), and Hunterian Museum (GLAHM).')

If you are unsure what the relevant MDA code is, the complete list for UK institutions is available here: <http://collectionstrust.org.uk/mdacodes/>.

Images and figures

Images should be submitted as separate files (not embedded within the text), in .tif or .jpg format. Files must be of a suitable resolution and size for print (300dpi/ppi), and named in the following format:

[Surname][year][Figure number] (e.g. 'Smith2017Fig1.jpg').

Tables, graphs, and charts do not need to be submitted separately, but can be embedded within the text.

Image captions should be included within the main body of the text, to indicate where the figure should be placed.

Image captions should credit the copyright holder (usually the creator), and preferably include the date of creation (e.g. 'Image: John Smith, 2017'). If you are not the creator, you must obtain written permission to reproduce content from the copyright holder, and credit them. Images taken from the internet should be credited with the source, including a URL.

Captions should include the following pieces of information:

- Figure number
- Description of image or specimen
- Accession number (if required)
- Image credit

Example: Figure 1. Taxidermy walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) at the Horniman Museum and Gardens (LDHRN-NH.H.44). © Horniman Museum and Gardens.

The *Journal* is printed in black and white. All figures should be easily viewable in this format. A full-colour PDF version will be made available online.

Large files can be sent to the Editor using a file-sharing application such as Dropbox, or via Google Drive.

Please also see the [Copyright](#) section for information on attribution of images and figures.

Submitting your manuscript

All manuscripts should be submitted as Microsoft Word-compatible files (.doc, .docx, or similar), via email (editor@natsca.org). All submissions must be accompanied by

a completed Publishing Agreement, which can be downloaded from our website:
<http://www.natsca.org/jonsc-guidelines-for-authors>

The Editor will reply to acknowledge receipt, then examine the manuscript and either send it for peer review, request revision prior to review, or reject it, based on the quality and significance of the work and how suitable it is for the *Journal*. The Editor may consult the Editorial Board when making this decision.

To check that your manuscript meets our publication criteria, you can compare it against the criteria used by reviewers in assessing papers (see Peer Review Report form, available here:
http://natsca.org/sites/default/files/JoNSCReviewReport_final.docx).

Please note that NatSCA does not charge manuscript processing fees, and cannot offer payment for submissions.

Peer review process

Articles accepted for peer review will be sent to two experts in the appropriate subject area for comment. The *Journal* uses single-blind review (authors are identified to reviewers, but reviewers are anonymous), unless a reviewer requests to be identified.

The peer review process can take some time, and we request your patience. The reviewers' comments will be returned to the corresponding author anonymously, usually in the form of an annotated manuscript and/or a report with additional comments. The Editor may also add their own comments. A provisional recommendation will be given by the reviewers:

- Accept (publish without revision).
- Accept with minor revision (minor changes to content or structure required).
- Major revision (substantial changes to content or structure required before publication).
- Reject (not suitable for this publication, or would require revisions too substantial to be considered in its current form).

If minor revisions are required, a new deadline will be given to return the revised manuscript. This may be referred back to reviewers. Following further review, the manuscript may be accepted for publication or returned to authors for further revision.

If major revisions are required, the deadline given for returning the revised manuscript will be in the following year, for publication in the next *Journal* volume. This gives authors more time to ensure that the corrections are to their satisfaction, without having to rush to make tight deadlines.

Rejected papers may be resubmitted for another volume of the *Journal*, provided the issues identified have been addressed, and will go through the same process as all newly-submitted manuscripts.

Finalising the manuscript

Accepted articles will be laid out in house style using professional typesetting software. A proof copy of the final article will be sent to the corresponding author for approval, prior to publication. All authors must proof-read the article and return any comments/corrections by the given deadline.

A full-colour PDF copy of the finalised article will be sent to the corresponding author.

Authorship

The list of authors should include anyone who meets the following criteria (based on the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) [guidelines](#)):

1. Substantial contributions to design, collection of data, or analysis and interpretation of data.
2. Drafting or revising the article critically.
3. Final approval of the version to be published.
4. Accountability for accuracy and integrity of all aspects of the work.

Contributors who do not meet all four criteria should be included in the Acknowledgements section and not identified as an author.

If changes to the author list are required, or if improper conduct regarding authorship is suspected, please contact the Editor (editor@natsca.org).

Conflicts of interest and funding

Conflicts of interest may occur when an author, their employer, institution, or an affiliated person:

- a) has interests in the publication of a manuscript that could cause them to gain or lose financially.
- b) has personal relationships that could influence or bias the authors' opinions.

Any conflicting or financial interests must be declared in Acknowledgements.

Any sources of funding that have contributed to the research/project, or production of the manuscript, must also be declared in Acknowledgements.

If anyone suspects that an undeclared conflict of interest exists, they should contact the Editor (editor@natsca.org).

Plagiarism

Authors must ensure that all sources of information used in the preparation of their manuscript are fully disclosed and properly referenced. All work submitted to the *Journal of Natural Science Collections* must be original. Authors must not copy, in whole or in part, the work of any other person (published or unpublished).

Duplicate publication (publication of multiple papers using the same content) is not allowed. It is also unethical to submit the same article to a second journal while it is under consideration by another (parallel submission).

If any person suspects that a published article contains plagiarised material, please contact the Editor (editor@natsca.org).

Corrections and retractions

The Editor will issue a correction if a small portion of a publication is found to contain misleading information or data (especially if this is the result of an honest error), or if the author list is incorrect or incomplete.

The Editor will consider retracting a publication if:

- there is evidence that the data or main findings are unreliable or seriously flawed,
- material has been duplicated from an article already published elsewhere, without proper referencing or permission (redundant publishing),
- it contains plagiarised material, or
- it reports research or practices that are unethical.

If errors, misconduct, plagiarism, or unethical practices are suspected, please contact the Editor (editor@natsca.org), who will investigate. If necessary, a correction or retraction will be made. Retractions can be made by the author(s) or the Editor.

Appeals and complaints

Appeals

If an author feels that a decision made regarding their submission was unfair, they should appeal to the Editor (editor@natsca.org) as soon as possible.

The Editor will review the appeal and all related documentation. They may consult the Editorial Board, and/or refer the manuscript to new reviewers. The Editor's decision is final.

Complaints

Complaints about the policies and procedures of the *Journal* or conduct of the editorial team should be made to the Editor (editor@natsca.org). All complaints will be acknowledged and addressed as quickly as possible.

Complaints about a member of the editorial team will be referred to the Editorial Board, and the editorial team will not be involved.