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the already dehydrated fish specimens ranged from 15.08 to 186.97 grams. The specimens showed an average gain of 91% of the original wet weight. Fins and jaws were malleable in the fish specimens; digits and jaws were malleable in the amphibian specimens. Arms and tentacles were malleable in the squid, but still retain much of their schivled appearance. The eyes did rehydrate and assumed a similar shape to the originally preserved specimens. The fish specimens that were discovered dehydrated showed an averaged gain (from dehydrated wet to wet weight) of 80%. Weight gains in specimens of similar weight were significantly higher than in the Vogt (1991) technique ($P=0.046$) and the Vogt (1998) technique ($P=0.003$).

Discussion

The buffer method lends itself to use with a variety of specimens. The preservation history seems to have an affect on the recovery of wet weight in this technique and in those reported previously (Vogt 1991, 1998). Specimens, which had the highest recovery, were either preserved in 70% ethanol or a commercially available glycol based solution, such as Carosafe or Wardsafe. Specimens that had a history of preservation in 50% or higher solutions of isopropanol and showed the typical hardness or brittleness did not show the same gains in wet weight as the specimens preserved in ethanol. The buffer tablets do not require any special storage procedures as acetic acid would and are available from most chemical supply companies. Dean (1995) lists the necessary chemicals to make one's own buffer solution if one have access to the chemicals.

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The Future of Collecting Collections of the Future Opportunities & Expectations

**Oxford University Museum,
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Joint BCG & NSCG Conference**

A number of reports have come out over the last few years detailing governments expectations for museums in areas such as social inclusion, life long learning, developing audiences and working with schools and community groups. Many of these address museums role as institutions, but what of museums defining element, their collections? How are biological collections being used and developed to meet these more explicit agendas?

The conference looked at how biological collections are used and cared for and how collections are being developed for more applied uses, rather than just repeating the mantra of what a marvellous resource collections are. The theme was a timely one as Resource had recently set up the Regional Museums Task Force seeking to develop a more unified strategic vision for museums. Their report is now out and an initial response from one BCG member can be found on page three.

The following are some of the papers presented at conference.