

FAUNAL MATERIALS

(not including micro-fauna & palaeoenvironmental remains)

GLOSSARY

Ecofacts: non-artefactual organic remains.

Faunal: animal remains (e.g. bone, teeth, antler, fish scale, mollusc shell, eggshell).

Please see the botanical materials factsheet for advice on micro-fauna and palaeoenvironmental remains (e.g. insects, beetles) derived from archaeological excavations.

STORAGE

- ◆ Objects made of faunal materials (e.g. horn beakers) require different storage to bulk faunal ecofacts (e.g. animal bone fragments).
- ◆ Store objects with individual packing and support. Bag bulk finds and store in archive boxes with a layer of padding in the base.
- ◆ Support fragile, cracked, split or large faunal materials with padding.
- ◆ Use polyester wadding to pack or support fragile faunal remains like eggs (not cotton wool). Do not stack.
- ◆ Avoid using rubber and urethane foam for packing, as vapours can make bone and antler deteriorate.



Fish bones © Bristol Culture



Scallop shell pilgrim badge © Bristol Culture

LABELLING AND MARKING

Large bones, some teeth and antlers can be given surface marking.

- ◆ Undertake a documentation check to ensure that the information is correct before remains are marked.
- ◆ Ensure that marking is clear and legible.
- ◆ Use a layer of Paraloid B72, then ink, then a layer of Paraloid B72 to seal.
- ◆ Label bags or boxes for small items.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

- ◆ Temperature: 15–25°C maximum.
- ◆ Humidity: 45–55% (over 65% RH is high risk for mould).
- ◆ Illuminance: 300 lux maximum.
- ◆ UV Radiation: 0–10 microwatts per lumen ideal. 75 microwatts per lumen maximum.

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INDICATORS OF DECAY

- ◆ Breakage or disintegration.
- ◆ Cracks and splits.
- ◆ Mould.
- ◆ Efflorescence (salts leaching from the surface).
- ◆ Purple surface deposit (vivianite, a phosphate mineral).
- ◆ Yellow or orange discolouration (on ivory).
- ◆ Pests (e.g. carpet beetle, clothes moths).

WHERE YOU WILL COME ACROSS FAUNAL REMAINS

- ◆ In archaeological excavation archives (bulk finds, micro-fauna, palaeoenvironmental remains).
- ◆ In archaeological objects of all periods e.g. vessels, handles, tools.
- ◆ In statues and carvings.
- ◆ In Ancient Egyptian collections.

HANDLING

Be aware that faunal materials can be less robust than they appear because of burial processes. Use two hands to support them. Handle small items over a padded surface or in the box.

- ◆ Use nitrile gloves. Cotton gloves may snag and catch.

LOOK OUT FOR

- ◆ Faunal materials that are part of composite objects (e.g. bone-handled knives) may need different storage and handling conditions.
- ◆ Be aware that there are legal and ethical issues relating to ivory which may affect your exhibition and loan planning.



Bone gaming piece © Bristol Culture

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- ◆ Archaeological faunal remains can be contaminated with mould or with chemicals from the excavation site (e.g. toxic metal salts, cess-pit material).
- ◆ Wear an appropriate facemask if mould is a risk.
- ◆ Use gloves, avoid opening bags and boxes unless necessary.
- ◆ Sharp edges on breaks. Handle with care!

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SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Baker, P. and Worley, F. (2019) *Animal Bones and Archaeology: Recovery to Archive*. Swindon: Historic England

Canadian Conservation Institute (2010) *Care of Ivory, Bone, Horn and Antler*. CCI Notes 6/1

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2014a) *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*

Connecting to Collections Care (2018) *The Care and Documentation of Ivory*.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Cronyn, J. M. (1990) *The Elements of Archaeological Conservation*. London: Routledge

Perrin, K., Brown, D.H., Lange, G., Bibby, D., Carlsson, A., Degraeve, A., Kuna, M., Larsson, Y., Pálsdóttir, S.U., Stoll-Tucker, B., Dunning, C. and Rogalla Von Bieberstein, A. (2014) *The Standard and Guide to Best Practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe*. EAC Guidelines 1