



## WAM Taxonomic Services Submission Guidelines

Last Revised: June, 2013

### WAMTS Submission Workflow

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1. Instructions for **Live Vertebrate** specimens
2. Fix/store specimens and correctly label
3. Tissue voucher preservation
4. Prepare electronic data
5. Submit your project online
6. Package and deliver your specimens
7. Project progress and delivery of outcomes
8. Checklist

### WAMTS Contacts

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#### Dr Amber S. Beavis (Primary Contact)

*WAMTS Role:* WAMTS Manager & Arachnida IDs

*Email:* [Amber.Beavis@museum.wa.gov.au](mailto:Amber.Beavis@museum.wa.gov.au)

*Phone:* (08) 9212 3820

*Mobile:* 0411 486 275

#### Live Submissions of Vertebrates

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Contact the following WAM staff prior to WAMTS online project submission.

#### Dr Paul Doughty

*WAM Role:* Curator of Herpetology

*Email:* [Paul.Doughty@museum.wa.gov.au](mailto:Paul.Doughty@museum.wa.gov.au)

*Phone:* (08) 9427 2876

#### Ms Linette Umbrello

*WAMTS Role:* Terrestrial Vertebrates

*Email:* [Linette.Umbrello@museum.wa.gov.au](mailto:Linette.Umbrello@museum.wa.gov.au)

*Phone:* (08) 9212 3754

Please be aware that our staff are often not available in the office due to fieldwork and project work. Please do not show up unannounced. Contact must be made the day before with relevant staff to inform us of your intention to submit specimens and a meeting time arranged with staff. Submissions must be made during business hours from 9am to 3pm daily.

If there are no Terrestrial Vertebrates staff members available to accept the live specimens you will be referred to the Wattle Grove Vet Clinic where the animals can be ethically euthanized and frozen until a WAM staff member is available.

- <http://www.localvet.com.au/Wattlegrove/>
- 791 Welshpool Road East, Wattle Grove WA 6107
- (08) 9453 6655

## 1. Submitting Live Animals

*All live animals submitted to the WA Museum must be accompanied by a hard copy of the relevant associated data. Please refer to steps 4. and 5. For submitting data electronically that accompanies live vertebrate specimens.*

**The WA Museum promotes the ethical treatment of animals. Any live animals not transported in line with the below procedures will be rejected:**

Live animals **must not** be submitted on a Friday after 12pm as there may be insufficient time to process them under ethical guidelines.

Live animals must be submitted to the WA Museum as soon as possible in appropriate transport containers. If you are not able to do so please consider the release or humane euthanasia of the animal.

### Small Mammals

- Must be submitted within 48 hours
- Small dasyurids may be transported in calico bags with hiding material and food
- Small rodents are recommended to be transported in durable small pet carriers with hiding material and food
- Keep well ventilated

### Frogs

- Must be submitted within 4 days
- Transported in ventilated plastic container with damp towel for moisture

### Reptiles

- Must be submitted within 4 days
- Transported in appropriate sized calico bag with substrate for hiding, keep well ventilated and cool
- No more than 2 individuals per bag

### Venomous Snakes

- Must be submitted within 4 days
- Transported in calico bag tied with labelled flagging tape, carried inside suitably sized pet carrier or pet pack
- Outside of container and bag to be clearly labelled: **Warning Venomous Snake**
- DO NOT HAND TO RECEPTION STAFF

### Birds

- No live birds to be submitted, unless at the request of WAM staff.

### Other Tips

- Do not use plastic or ziplock bags to transport reptiles or mammals
- No more than one species inside the same container
- Place animals of similar size together, separate large & small individuals
- No more than two specimens of small species (frogs/reptiles only) in the same container

## 2. Perservation, labelling and packaging of Terrestrial Vertebrate specimens

Fresh specimens may be submitted fixed or frozen.

### *Fixed*

Specimens either to be fixed in formalin solution\* or 100% ethanol. If fixing with formalin ensure a tissue sample is taken prior to preservation (see below for instructions on tissue preservation).

- Specimens with large muscular or fatty areas need to be injected with formalin, and 'pin-pricked' to allow greater absorption into the tissue.
- Do not store specimens in formalin for long periods of time.
- Include a data tag in heavy HB or 4B pencil on inside of container, plus label with alcohol-proof pen on outside.
- Transport in leak-proof dangerous goods approved containers.
- Do not send via Australian Post or by air.

Detailed information on the preservation of reptiles and frogs in formalin is available by contacting the WA Museum.

\* Formalin Solution: 100ml 34.5% formaldehyde diluted to 1L with water.

### *Frozen*

Wrap specimen in newspaper or absorbent paper towel. Double bag inside air-tight plastic bag.

- Please include hardcopy data inside the bag, as well as a label on the outside of the bag.
- Transport by courier or by hand in an esky containing frozen ice blocks.
- Include extra newspaper or towelling to avoid leakage.

Dry specimens (mummified, feathers, bones, skin etc.) must be triple bagged (zip-lock or heat-seal) to prevent contamination from pests such as museum beetles (Dermestidae). Specimen labels should be included inside bag with the specimen.

**Calico bags, containers, eskies and pet packs will not be returned unless requested to hold for collection.**

## 3. Preservation of Tissue voucher specimens

If liquid nitrogen is not available, please preserve tissues in 100% ethanol. We recommend screw-cap vials with O-ring, but preferably not Cryovials as ethanol evaporates more quickly from these vials. Keep vials cool, preferably refrigerated or frozen (-18°C) to avoid evaporation.

Tissue vials should have a field number written on card, in pencil, placed inside the vial with the tissue. The number is repeated twice on the outside of the vial and associated further information attached in hardcopy.

### *Tissue reference photos*

- If depositing **tissue vouchers** of small dasyurids or murids, please make sure a photo of the **animal** is taken and a photo of its **pes** (hind foot) with your **field number visible in the photos** so that it is clear which photo belongs to which voucher specimen.

## 4. Prepare electronic data

*It is imperative that your data spreadsheet is correctly formatted and that you complete all the required fields. Although it might seem as if some of our guidelines for completing your data spreadsheet are very exact, this is because: (a) the WAM databases cannot accept incorrectly formatted data – if your datasheet contains errors, WAM databases will simply not accept it; (b) incorrectly completed data spreadsheets can compromise the integrity of WAM databases (e.g. if you misspell a species name it will not show up in future searches for this species). We will not accept*

*projects until we have received data in an acceptable format. If you are unsure about any aspect of preparing your electronic data submission, please contact the WAMTS manager.*

- a. Taxon-specific spreadsheet templates may be found on submission page of the WAMTS website (<http://museum.wa.gov.au/consultation/submissions>). These spreadsheets contain:
  - i. Information on which fields must be completed (see fields highlighted in yellow)
  - ii. Detailed information on required formats
  - iii. Information on character limits for each column.
- b. Key rules to follow are:
  - i. Always format the entire spreadsheet as text
  - ii. Ensure that your latitude and longitude entries follow the correct format AND use the correct symbols (e.g. "22°44`29.39"S")
  - iii. Ensure that your "SITE" field relates your site to a gazetteer site (available at <http://www.ga.gov.au/place-names/>). For example, "Site X, ca. 8 km W. of Newman".
  - iv. "DTMNDBY" (determined by) should follow the format of: "Beavis, A.S."
  - v. "COLLTOR" (collected by) should follow the format of: "Beavis, A.S."
- c. If in doubt, please email or call the WAMTS manager for advice on preparing your electronic submission.
- d. For correct spelling of Taxonomic names please refer to our Checklist of Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna of Western Australia (<http://museum.wa.gov.au/research/departments/terrestrial-zoology/checklist-terrestrial-vertebrate-fauna-western-australia>)

## 5. Submit your project online

*Once you have prepared your submission you will submit the project to the WAM via the WAMTS submission webpage. Your submission requires you to fill in an online form and to attach your data spreadsheet. You will receive back from the WAM: (a) a WAMTS project number; (b) a Transfer of Custody form; and (c) your data spreadsheet with WAM registration numbers filled in.*

- a. Open the WAMTS webpage: <http://museum.wa.gov.au/consultation/>
- b. Go to: "Consultancy login" and login to WAMTS. If you require a login or have forgotten your password, contact the WAMTS Manager.
- c. Go to: "Submit samples for identification or registration with WAM".
- d. Fill in the online registration form, upload your data spreadsheet(s) and submit.
- e. WAMTS staff will receive your project details and will process your project submission. If there are problems with your submission, WAMTS staff will contact you.

## 6. Package and deliver your specimens

*You will receive back from the WAM: a WAMTS project number and a Transfer of Custody form. Once you have received your Transfer of Custody form you may arrange delivery of your specimens.*

- a. Receive the following materials from the WAM via email:
  - i. WAMTS project number (please quote this when making any enquiries about your project)
  - ii. Transfer of Custody form (please print in triplicate and submit with your specimens)
- b. Email the WAMTS manager to advise your intended delivery day and time.
- c. **NB: You must up to date with your submissions. The WAM reserves the right to refuse to issue new project numbers until your previous submissions have been received.**

*If sending frozen or fixed Terrestrial Vertebrate specimens please deliver in person. Tissue samples can be delivered in person or via courier provided they have been packaged appropriately*

- d. Label all boxes with the following details:
  - i. WAMTS project number
  - ii. Taxon group
  - iii. Consultancy
- e. Please package these boxes in an appropriate protective covering (e.g. a padded envelope for tissue vouchers). This prevents damage to the specimens and keeps different parts of your submission together. Ethanol preserved specimens and tissues must be packaged with absorbent material in case of spillage.
- f. Print your Transfer of Custody form in triplicate, fill in the appropriate fields and include the three copies with your submission.
- g. Specimens should be delivered using the following details:
  - i. Contact: Dr Amber S. Beavis (WAMTS Manager)
  - ii. Postal Address: Locked Bag 49, Welshpool DC, WA, 6986.
  - iii. Street Address: 49 Kew St, Welshpool DC, WA, 6986.

## **7. Project progress and delivery of outcomes**

*Museum staff will commence work on your project. If you have any questions about your project please contact the WAMTS Manager and quote your WAMTS project number. When your identification has been completed you will receive an email notification. After this time you may access and download your results and invoice breakdown (if applicable) via the WAMTS website.*

*Please note that Terrestrial Vertebrate specimens can be submitted for identification or registration only. The Terrestrial Vertebrates Department does not provide detailed identification reports.*

- a. Once your project has been received, the following steps will occur:
  - i. Your submission will be checked for adherence to museum guidelines.
  - ii. Quality control protocols will be implemented to ensure that your electronic data matches specimen labels.
  - iii. If there are significant issues with your submission, WAM staff will contact you to explain the problems and to arrange a time for you to pick up your specimens. You will then need to correct the problems and resubmit your project (under the same WAMTS project number).
  - iv. Please note that resubmitted projects will go to the end of the queue when lodged for the second time.
  - v. For this reason, if you are at all uncertain about aspects of your submission, PLEASE CONTACT WAMTS STAFF PRIOR TO SUBMITTING YOUR PROJECT. A quick phone discussion can solve these issues pre-emptively and easily.
- b. The time it takes to complete a project depends on a number of factors:
  - i. Current WAMTS workload at the museum.
  - ii. Quality of the submission (e.g. if submissions adhere to all WAMTS guidelines, then staff can start work on your IDs faster).
  - iii. Quality of the specimens (e.g. damaged specimens are more difficult to identify).
  - iv. Taxonomic diversity contained within the project (projects with high levels of taxonomic diversity and/ or new genera/ species are more complex and take more time to complete).
- c. When your project has been completed you will receive an email notification containing instructions on how to access and download your project/ data/ invoice breakdown.

- i. Please note that we do not issue invoices directly (these come from the centralised government office, Office of Shared Services). For your information we provide you with an invoice breakdown that gives a summary of where each charge has come from.
- d. To obtain your report anyone at your consultancy with an account can access your consultancy's reports by following these instructions:
  - i. Go to the WAMTS home page and click on the big red button that says "Consultancy login – including reports and job history".
  - ii. Log in with your username and password that you set at your first log in (details in the account activation email) or request a password reset if necessary.
  - iii. Click on the "Results" tab, which will take you to your personal page.
  - iv. Under "Consultancy Page" click "<CONSULTANCY NAME>", which will take you to where the reports and invoice breakdowns are.

**Submission Checklist**

1. Fix/ store specimen in field as appropriate:
  - 100% EtOH
  - 10% Formalin then transferred to 75% EtOH
2. Prepare and preserve specimens
  - Terrestrial Vertebrates
  - Tissue vouchers
3. Store specimen in correct vials
  - Screw cap O-ring (tissue collection)
4. Label specimens with hard-copy of data
  - Produce location labels
  - Print labels
  - Place copy of data with specimens
5. Prepare electronic data
  - Insert data into WAMTS template
  - Format entire spreadsheet as text
  - Check formatting against guidelines
6. Submit your project online
  - Submit WAMTS online form
7. Package and deliver your specimens
  - Put specimens into box, or esky if frozen, with absorbent material
  - Print Transfer of Custody form in triplicate, and sign.
  - Hand deliver/ Courier