

INSTRUCTIONS ON SORTING ZOOARCHAEOLOGICAL SAMPLES FROM EASTERN WOODLANDS

Step 1

- Separate into animal classes (e.g., divide into mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, shell). This is called your “rough sort”
 - Have Dr. VanDerwarker check your rough sort before continuing.
-

Step 2

- Work on Mammals first
 - Separate into size classes (large, medium, small mammals)
 - ID the deer first
 - Information to record
 1. element name
 2. number of fragments (should be “1” unless they refit; if you have 2 that refit, you record as “2/1”)
 3. weight in grams (check scale!)
 4. Side of element (left/right) if applicable
 5. % complete (how much of the whole element is represented? Indicate in 5% intervals (e.g., 35%))
 6. Portion (proximal, distal, lateral, medial, etc.) – give as much information as possible – this will help calculate a firm MNI
 7. F/U – fused or unfused epiphyses – this gives us information on age
 8. B/U – burned or unburned
 9. Comments – anything additional to note? Cut marks, modification, carnivore gnawing, healed break?
 - Have Amber check your mammal IDs before moving onto the birds
-

Step 3

- Move onto your birds
 - You will probably have to be fairly vague with specific identifications, considering that our comparative collection has no regional overlap with Eastern Woodlands birds. Be conservative, and do not identify past genus.
 - Separate into size classes (large, medium, small birds)
 - Record the same information as above with mammals
 - Have Dr. VanDerwarker check your bird IDs before moving onto the reptiles/amphibians
-

Step 4

- Move onto your reptiles & amphibians
 - Nearly all this category will be turtles – you will have a lot of soft-shelled turtle, and probably box turtle as well
 - Separate into turtle & non-turtle
 - ID the turtles as best you can
 - Indicate name of carapace/plastron bone whenever possible – we need this information to calculate MNI
 - After you complete the turtles, move onto the other reptile/amphibian specimens if you have any
 - Have Dr. VanDerwarker check your reptile/amphibian IDs before moving onto the fish
-

Step 5

- Time for the fish!
 - Separate into large vs. small fish
 - Separate skull elements from vertebra, spines, and ribs
 - Determine elements for skull pieces
 - Try to identify the fish to family if possible. You will not be able to identify beyond family with our comparative collection
 - Record data on datasheet
 - Have Dr. VanDerwarker check your IDS!
-

Step 6

- Check all deer remains for evidence of butchering or cut marks – record location on deer skeleton sheet.
 - Have Dr. VanDerwarker check your cut marks
-

Step 7

- Large mammal long bone fragments
 - Record maximum length and width on each large mammal long bone shaft fragment, including those identified to genus/species
 - Record observed weathering stage on each large mammal long bone fragment as well (see weathering stage sheet)
 - Before recording these data, have Dr. VanDerwarker check all the long bone fragments to ensure they are properly classified
-

Step 8

- Once you have sorted, identified, and recorded all of your data, and it has been checked by Dr. VanDerwarker, you give her your datasheets.