

# Procuring and Preserving Animals for Biological Instruction

*Raymond O. Flagg*

Carolina Biological Supply Company  
Burlington, North Carolina 27215

Carolina Biological obtains its animals for preservation from many sources: some from cultures, some from natural or managed habitats where collections are made year after year, and some from individuals or organizations. Contrary to outrageous animal-activist propaganda, no species is threatened with extinction by procurement for teaching, and humane handling is the rule.

When an animal is sacrificed for preservation, it is done humanely in accordance with the nature of the organism. Most invertebrates (e.g., grasshoppers) and aquatic vertebrates (e.g., frogs) are euthanized with dilute alcohol solutions; non-aquatic vertebrates (e.g., rats) are euthanized with pure carbon monoxide. (After euthanasia, postmortem movement in response to perfusion with fixative does *not* mean that sentient animals are embalmed alive.)

Many animals are dead when purchased. Fishermen furnish fish and sharks. Abattoirs are sources of fetal pigs (offal to the food industry), and parts of cows, pigs, and sheep. Animal shelters supply dead dogs. Animal shelters (primary source) and USDA-licensed dealers supply dead cats, unfortunate creatures that were abandoned or were considered problem animals by some governmental unit.

For at least two decades, most frogs preserved for biological study have come from a desert in western Mexico. Man's changing of that ecology by irrigation for farming resulted in large populations of frogs where there had been very few. A frog-leg industry sprang up and thrives. A fraction of the frogs collected by the Mexicans from the man-made habitat are preserved for biological study. The collection and export of frogs is controlled and regulated by the Mexican government.

Endangered and threatened animals are not preserved and offered for sale by Carolina Biological. A species must be relatively plentiful for use in general biological instruction. Efforts are made to treat populations as continuing resources that will be available for harvests in the future.