

back of skull. The brain can be readily washed out with no injury to the skull, particularly if a jet of water as from a syringe or faucet is available. A piece of wood whittled flat and used as a spoon will materially assist the process. In tropical countries or very damp climates persons having sufficient skill to do so without danger of injuring the specimen should remove the eyes, tongue, brain, and all the large muscles, as the skulls will otherwise become very offensive. Inexperienced collectors should preserve the skulls in formalin, alcohol, strong cane rum, or a solution of arsenic in water,¹ taking care to label them with pencil or waterproof ink on stiff paper (not pasteboard). Skulls placed in formalin should be removed after a few days and dried. Fasten the skull label securely and place the skull where it will dry as quickly as possible. Unless they are drying very rapidly it will be necessary to protect small skulls from flies. Never put salt or alum on a skull. The skull label may be fastened by seizing one end of its thread between the tips of a pair of fine-pointed forceps, with which the thread is pushed through the flesh at the fork of the jaws and out at the mouth. Or it may be tied to a short piece of the neck left in place for the purpose. The former method, however, is generally preferable. In either case the label should be tied close to the bone leaving the least possible slack, and the thread should always be cut off neatly.

When many skulls are to be cared for at once they may be very conveniently treated by "stringing" on a cord or wire passed through the loops by which the labels are attached (never through the fork of the lower jaw). The "strings" can be hung before a fire or in the sunlight—wherever the skulls will dry most rapidly and thoroughly. Care must be taken that they are not stolen by cats, rats, or dogs.

10. Tear off a piece of cotton slightly larger than the body of the animal. The exact size required can only be learned by practice. Roll it roughly into shape

and grasp its whole length with the forceps. If the forceps are too short for this seize it by the end which is to go into the head. Holding the cotton body by the forceps in the right hand, slip the skin on with the left until the points of the forceps have reached the mouth. Then grasp the head with the fingers of the left hand firmly enough to hold the cotton filling in place. Remove the forceps and with the right hand work the skin back over the artificial body. This method of putting the skin on to the body obviates the risk of stretching incurred in an attempt to push the body into the skin. For animals larger than a squirrel, stuffing of excelsior or tow is preferable to that made of cotton, as it permits more rapid and thorough drying of the skin.

11. When the artificial body is in place the wires are to be inserted in the legs and tail. Tear off a bit of cotton large enough to fill the skin of the leg, and project well into the body cavity. Then lay a wire on it, letting one end project a short distance beyond the edge of the cotton. Now twirl the wire with the fingers of the right hand, at the same time pressing lightly with those of the left over the edge of the cotton nearest the free end of the wire. The fibres will soon become wrapped about the wire at this point so that the whole mass of cotton will revolve with the wire, though fastened to it in a narrow region only and elsewhere standing out in a light, elastic mass.

Insert the wire into the position formerly occupied by the leg bone (or alongside the bone if this has been left in) and drive the point securely into foot, taking care not to distort heel. If the cotton has been securely fastened, it will be carried with the wire so that it will now shape itself to the inside of the skin and fill out the leg to its original size. With animals the size of a skunk, woodchuck, or rabbit (in which the leg bones are invariably to be left in place) it will be found more convenient to insert the wire first and then wrap wire and bone together to the required size and form.

The wire must invariably be wrapped with cotton before insertion into closely furred or naked tails. To wrap a tail

1. This is not, strictly speaking, a solution. When powdered white arsenic is stirred in water (about a teaspoonful to a quart) enough is held in suspension to make a strong preservative fluid.