

## Royal Museum for Central Africa

### Data transcription: registers of zoological specimens

Thank you for your cooperation in our mission of unlocking the information of the collections held at the Royal Museum for Central Africa!

If you would like to get better acquainted with the animals of the African continent and help science with a more thorough contribution, then the transcription of data is something for you!

The aim of this tutorial is to help you to deliver correct information in a standardized form, so that scientists can directly use it to enrich their collection metadata.

Each project is accompanied by a short text about the collection you will be working with. Click on “Get started” to proceed. As soon as you once again click on “Get started”, the page will refresh to show you an image – a specimen with labels or a page from a register – and a form (or table) consisting of several fields next to and under it.

The screenshot shows a web interface for the 'Registry of the Bird collection of the AfricaMuseum'. The background is a photograph of a bookshelf with books labeled with numbers. The page features the Africa Museum logo, a title, and descriptive text about the collection. At the bottom, there is a progress bar and statistics for the project.

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**AFRICA**  
museum

## Registry of the Bird collection of the AfricaMuseum

Our bird collection, almost entirely obtained in Africa, contains more than 150,000 bird specimens, including flat-skins, specimens preserved in alcohol, mounted specimen and skeletons, but also eggs, bird nests etc.

Approximately 250 species and sub-species of bird are represented by type specimens.

The first bird specimen in our ornithology collection date back to 1897, but only as of the years 1910-1920, when Belgian zoologist Henri Schouteden started to work at the scientific services in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, bird registers have been written as they are shown now.

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0% Validated 0% Transcribed 126 Tasks 0 Volunteers 126 Tasks

Our current project is about transcribing the bird registers. Our bird collection, almost entirely obtained in Africa, contains over 150,000 bird specimens, including flat-skins, specimens preserved in alcohol, mounted specimen and skeletons, but also eggs, bird nests etc.

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These registers have been digitalized because they contain valuable information about our bird collection (localities, collectors, special observations, ...), which can be added to our digital databases and thus improve collection management and serve scientific research.

### Some general conventions:

For this specific project the template is strait forward – every field in the table is a column in the register. The titles in register are written in French (or Dutch), and in the table they are written in the same language. All registers have the same layout with 9 columns: Number, Designation, Origin, Dates, Diverse Information, Expeditor, Catalog Number, Justification and Observation. Every row represents one specimen.

DOE·DAT · Registry of the Bird collection of the AfricaMuseum birds0016.jpg Skip Create forum topic Tutorial

OISEAUX					OISEAUX			
NUM.	DESIGNATION	ORIGINE	DATES	RENSEIGNEMENTS DIVERS	EXPÉDITEUR	NUMÉRO CATALOGUE	JUSTIFICATION	OBSERVATIONS
114	<i>faute pigeon</i> <i>Chalcophaps indica</i> <i>à l'abri de la station</i>	<i>Belgique</i> <i>Tervuren</i>	<i>avril 1910</i> <i>Janvier 1911</i>		<i>Huyghe</i> <i>Belgique</i>			Ⓧ
115	<i>gros macrotis à la fin</i> <i>l'année dernière</i>			<i>gros, les 10 fruits jaunes</i>			<i>renvoilà le pour le fait de</i> <i>de l'année</i> <i>à l'abri de la station</i>	Ⓧ
116	<i>gros macrotis à la fin</i> <i>l'année dernière</i>			<i>à la vitesse élevée après de</i> <i>photographier</i> <i>gros jaunes</i>			<i>idem</i> <i>idem</i>	Ⓧ

1. Document details

Número	Désignation	Origin	Dates	Renseignements Divers	Expéditeur	Número du catalogue	Justification	Observations	Extra

2. Notes Record here any comments you may have about this task which might assist us in validating this task. Shrink

Your notes

You will soon need to jump around from field to field. Given the form's length and most computers' screen size, you will eventually get the page out of sight. To avoid going up and down all the time, you may want to first click on one of the symbols on the image, right under:



By clicking on the first symbol, a second window will open with only the specimen. By adapting both windows' sizes, you can arrange them so that the specimen is always in place on one and you may move around the form freely on the other.



By clicking on the second symbol, you fix the image at its place and may then move around freely on the form.

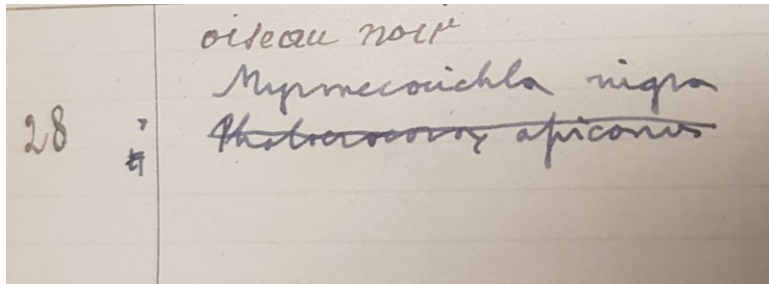
Whenever the text is written in a language you do not understand at all, skip the task. If, however, you can tell which information goes where, proceed with the transcription.

Also pertaining to language, we advise you not to change between languages once you have started a task, because otherwise all the information you have already entered will be lost.

Descriptive text should be written as it is.

Whenever you are not sure of the information you are transcribing, may it be because the handwriting is hard to read, the ink has almost disappeared, the information is covered by something, etc., take your best shot and write your interpretation between square brackets “[ ]” (e.g. write “500 m from the [coast]” or “between [Kinshasa] and [Banana]” when certain words or parts thereof are not clearly written). If despite any efforts, you really have no idea whatsoever of what’s written, enter simply “[ ]”.

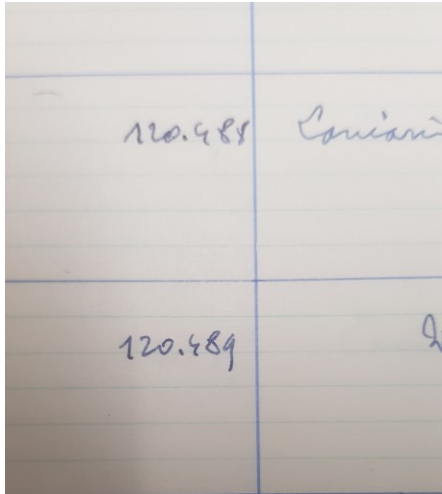
Use double tilde (~~) for the text which is strikethrough (in the example below it should be written: oiseau noir *Myrmecocichla nigra* ~~*Phalacrocorax africanus*~~).



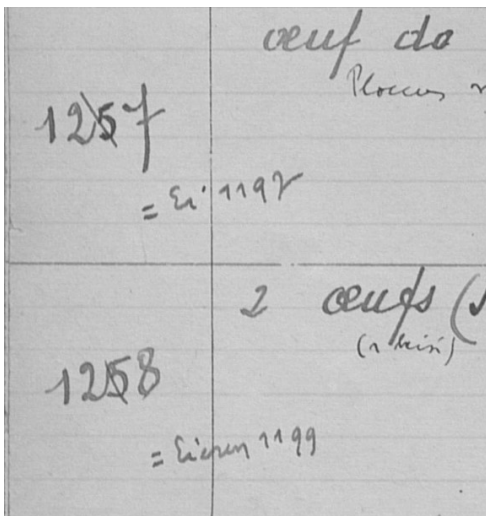
There is room for 10 records on each page of the register. Also in the table you see 10 rows. Try to fill in all the rows. If you only see numbers on the sheet, write numbers only.

A description of each field’s purpose and examples are hereunder.

**Numéro (Number):** a number given to the specimen by the collection manager. This is an end-to-end numbering from 1 to 128626. Please notice that the number should be written without a separation point (for the example below, the number should be written as ‘120488’ and ‘120489’).

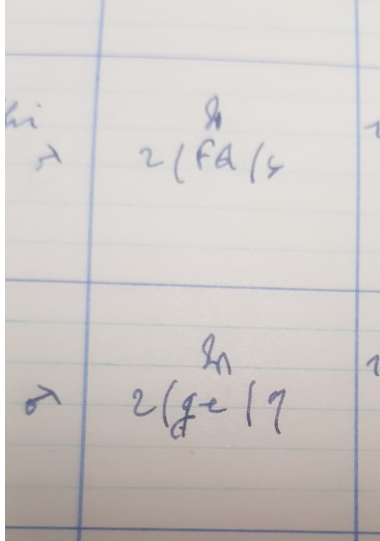


Sometimes there is another note next to the number, often it refers to the corresponding nest or eggs collected together with the specimen (see example below). Please add this extra information to the field 'Extra'.



**Désignation (Designation):** a name given to a specimen. Usually includes a Common name and/or a Scientific name. But it can be also just a brief description of a specimen (ex.: “petit oiseau couleur brune”).

**Origin:** a location where specimen was collected. Often you will find in this column the abbreviation ‘id’ (Latin for ‘idem’ ) or double apostrophe ‘’ meaning ‘the same’. If it is clear what location is meant, please copy it instead of using ‘id’! If it is not clear – fill in ‘id’. Sometimes you can find there a number (see example below) which represent a field or station number.



**Dates:** date when specimen was collected/received or arrived to the museum. Often you will find in this column the abbreviation ‘id’ (Latin for ‘idem’ ) or double apostrophe ‘’ meaning ‘the same’. If it is clear what date is meant, please copy it instead of using ‘id’! If it is not clear – fill in ‘id’.

**Renseignements divers (Diverse Information):** can include free text about the specimen (color, size, state), collection event (location, collector), position in exhibition, storage place or determination comments.

**Expéditeur (Expeditor):** is actually a name of a collector. Often you will find in this column the abbreviation ‘id’ (Latin for ‘idem’ ) or double apostrophe ‘’ meaning ‘the same’. If it is clear what expeditor is meant, please copy it instead of using ‘id’! If it is not clear – fill in ‘id’.

**Numéro du catalogue (Catalog Number):** most often this field is empty, but if there is any text, write it here.

**Justification and Observations:** different collection managers use these fields to add different kind of information about the storage, state of the specimen or identification notes. Ignore any symbols because we do not know their exact meaning.

**Extra:** please add here anything you don’t know where it belongs to. It could be the gender, corresponding number for eggs or nests, or remarks written between columns.

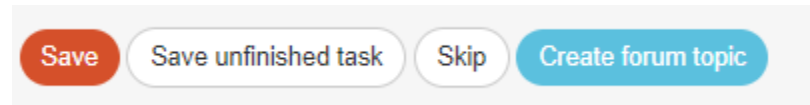
#### **Notes:**

*Your notes:* This is your space! Enter here any pertinent information you think might be helpful when validating this task.

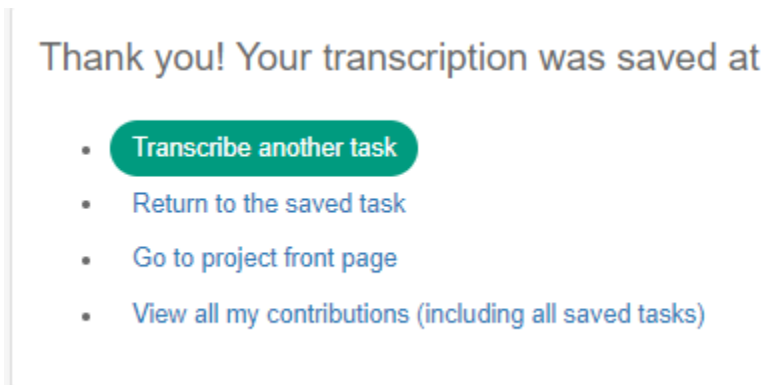
#### **Save task:**

All the information available on the page must find its way to one of the fields in the form. Once you have done that, you have finished this task!

If you have entered all the information, you may then click on **Save** at the bottom of the page. Here, you may also want to save an unfinished task to get back to it later, skip the task, or post a question on the Forum about this specimen.



In the next window, you can then choose your next action:



And that was it!

In case of doubts or questions, it may be useful to visit our Forum and either search for existing answers or even create a topic yourself.

If the available help buttons and the forum entries do not suffice, we can always be reached by e-mail (see the contacts listed under Contact on the main page). We will try to answer as soon and clearly as possible.

Finally, we remind you that every contribution, big or small, regular or sporadic, is greatly appreciated!

Do your best while keeping in mind the guidelines above, but never take a DoeDat-project as a chore or worry too much! Everyone makes mistakes and all data will be validated.

Thank you for joining us in our mission!