

The museum of Zion National Park is full of exhibits featuring artifacts and interactives that invite the visitor to connect with the stories shared. However, the back rooms where museum staff do most their work are extraordinary containing about 300,000 historic and natural objects. These photographs explore the behind the scenes work Zion National Park's museum technicians do to preserve the park's past and present for future generations. Welcome backstage!



Photo #1 Welcome to Zion National Park's Human History Museum. The public exhibition area seen here is a wonderful place for visitors to make connections between the place as it was and as it is. Museum staff do create important public exhibits, but they do so much more that is also vital to telling the story of Zion from many perspectives. Behind a closed door and down a hallway on any given day you will find four or five museum staff members working on various projects. Some projects are as simple as cleaning dirt from broken pottery pieces. Another project may include recording a video about dinosaur tracks for social media. Sometimes staff may be called upon to repair the fur on a mountain lion specimen. Every day can be really different.



Photo #2 Pictured is Amy, a museum technician for the National Park Service, searching for the original blueprint of a home now lived in by rangers. Almost all the buildings within Zion are considered historic, built fifty years or more ago. As buildings need updates or remodeling through the years, engineers and staff reference the blueprints for planning. It is important that historic buildings are maintained in ways that are true to their original architecture. Archiving blueprints is one way of ensuring changes to buildings are recorded and done properly.



Photo #3 Artists have been drawn to capture the beauty of the area now known as Zion National Park from the beginning. Some artwork is displayed in the public exhibit area while many more pieces are stored in the collections storage room. The room that houses all the park's collection objects is climate controlled. The room is kept at specific temperature and humidity levels that assist in keeping items in good condition. The painting seen in this photo is considered by some to be what originally brought Zion to national fame in the early 1900s for its unique geologic beauty. It was painted by Frederick Delenbaugh while visiting the canyon in 1903.



Photo #4 Artifacts are often simple items used by people in their daily lives. As the binoculars featured in this photo were being used by a park ranger many years ago, the ranger likely only thought of their usefulness in the moment of viewing far away wildlife. This storage drawer also features room keys for the original hotel in the park before it burned down from a fire originating in the Zion Lodge kitchen in 1966. How do you think the binoculars and the room keys help document the story of Zion?



Photo #5 Another example of a cultural item used in everyday life is this metate made from local Navajo sandstone. Metates were commonly used as grain and seed grinding surfaces for food production by indigenous people around the world. This metate was discovered in Zion National Park and is commonly associated with the Ancestral Puebloan and Southern Paiute Bands who lived in the canyon and grew maize and gathered pine nuts for food. The use of metates dates to 3500 B.C. (5,500 B.P.) in the region.



Photo #6 In our current times, society does not always require paper copies of things like receipts, contracts, or even park maps because electronic devices such as smartphones and computers are so widely used. However, this is a very recent change and close to 150 years of the park's historical documents are paper. Thousands of paper documents that record the history of this place are stored and cared for by museum technicians. In this photo you see a technician beginning a process of restoring and preserving a historical paper artifact.



Photo #7 A museum technician places documents that have become brittle and wrinkled into a high sided box covered with thick plastic. As water vapor is added and humidity rises inside the box, the paper absorbs some of the moisture from the air. The documents are then laid on a flat table and gently pressed flat to better preserve them. Current and future projects aim to make digital copies of documents. Why do you think this is important? What are some of the obstacles you think Zion might face in making this happen?



Photo #8 Museum staff constantly update the museum's database as information about objects, artifacts, and specimens evolve. They record preservation or repair work completed, background information, new research findings, donor information and other data relevant to the history and preservation of the item. The collection and maintenance of data about each item is crucial in giving them context.



Photo #9 In 1934 a handmade 3D map of Zion National Park was made for visitors to see and use while visiting the park. The structure was carved and painted at the National Park Service Western Museum Laboratory in Berkley, California and then shipped to park headquarters in Utah. This beautiful map revealing the dramatic landscape of the region is still displayed in the park museum for viewing by the millions of Zion visitors every year.



Photo #10 Pictured here are two museum technicians cleaning and repairing the historic 3D map of Zion in recent time. The map had a major rehabilitation in 1966 as well. Museum technicians are often called upon to learn and execute a wide variety of skills to maintain full exhibits and individual components.



Photo #11 Zion's museum collection also includes preserved plants and animals that are used by park scientists. Zion continues to monitor park ecosystems and the living things within those systems. Preserved specimens collected throughout the park's history, such as these birds, give biologists opportunity to see species up close and in detail. Do you think this is an advantage over only viewing a bird from a distance in nature? How so?



Photo #12 This Northern Flicker specimen was requested to be loaned for research by a Zion wildlife biologist. Technicians removed the bird from its protective plastic bag for viewing. The bag protects both the specimen and persons working with the specimen. Often times the process for preserving once living organisms requires use of toxic chemicals to keep the specimen from deteriorating through the years. Note the tag attached to the bird that shares the species name, location and year of collection, and the catalog number.



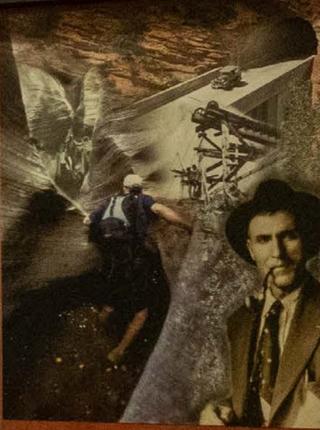
Photo #13 And of course, museum staff design and create exhibit elements for the museum visitor experience. At Zion, the permanent exhibits have been in place for years and are focused on the human history of the region. The other exhibit area changes approximately once per year to feature different topics and themes. In the photo, a museum technician prepares a desert bighorn sheep skull for temporary display. These exhibit units usually contain one or more objects on display, text, and media for communicating information.



**PLANTS**  
Diverse and Rich



**GEOLGY**  
Diverse and Inspiring







Admission to the  
Entertainment and Dining  
is limited to  
**REGISTERED GUESTS**  
Please identify yourself  
by giving attendant of bar  
your cabin number



MC 1  
1



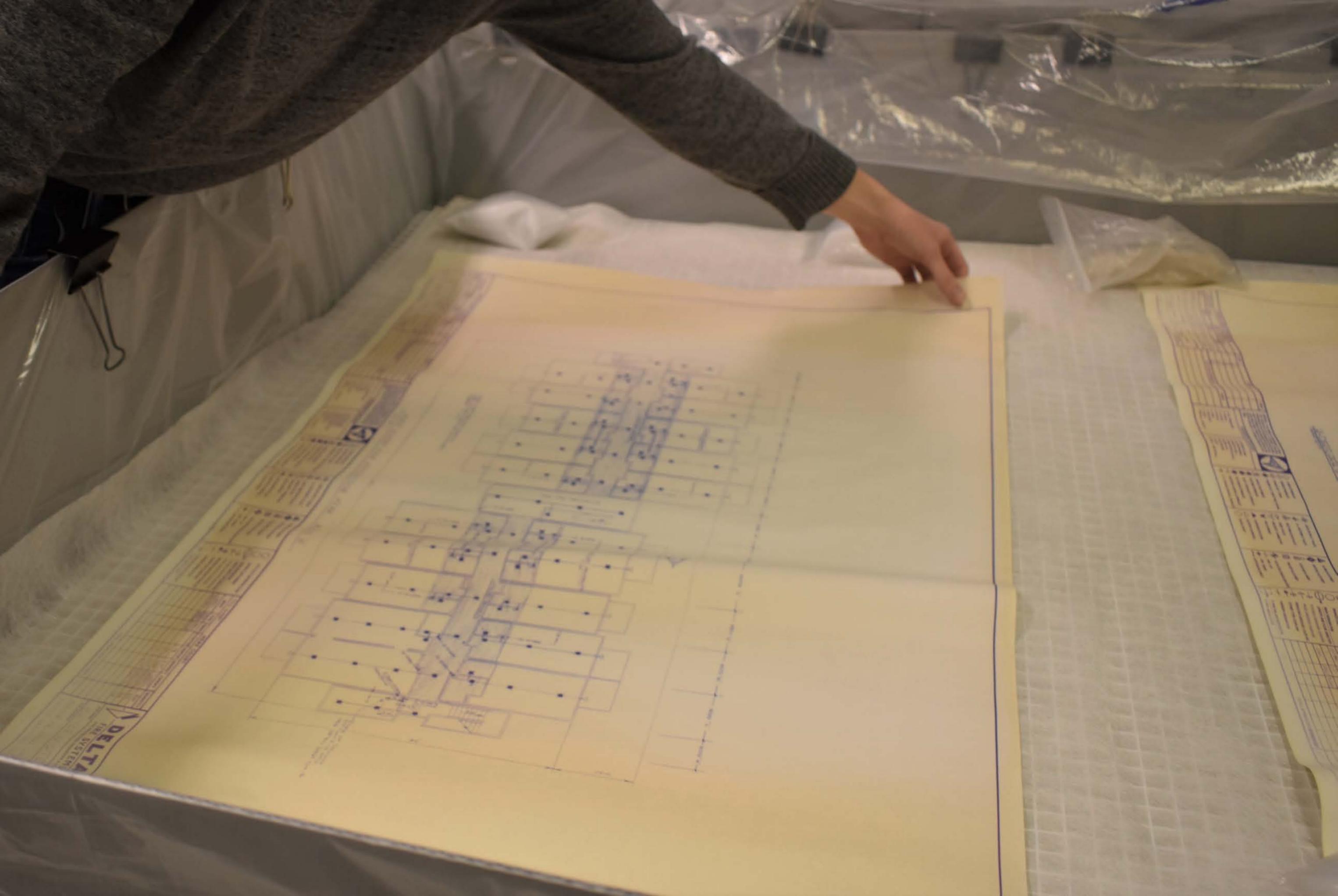
Zion 12452



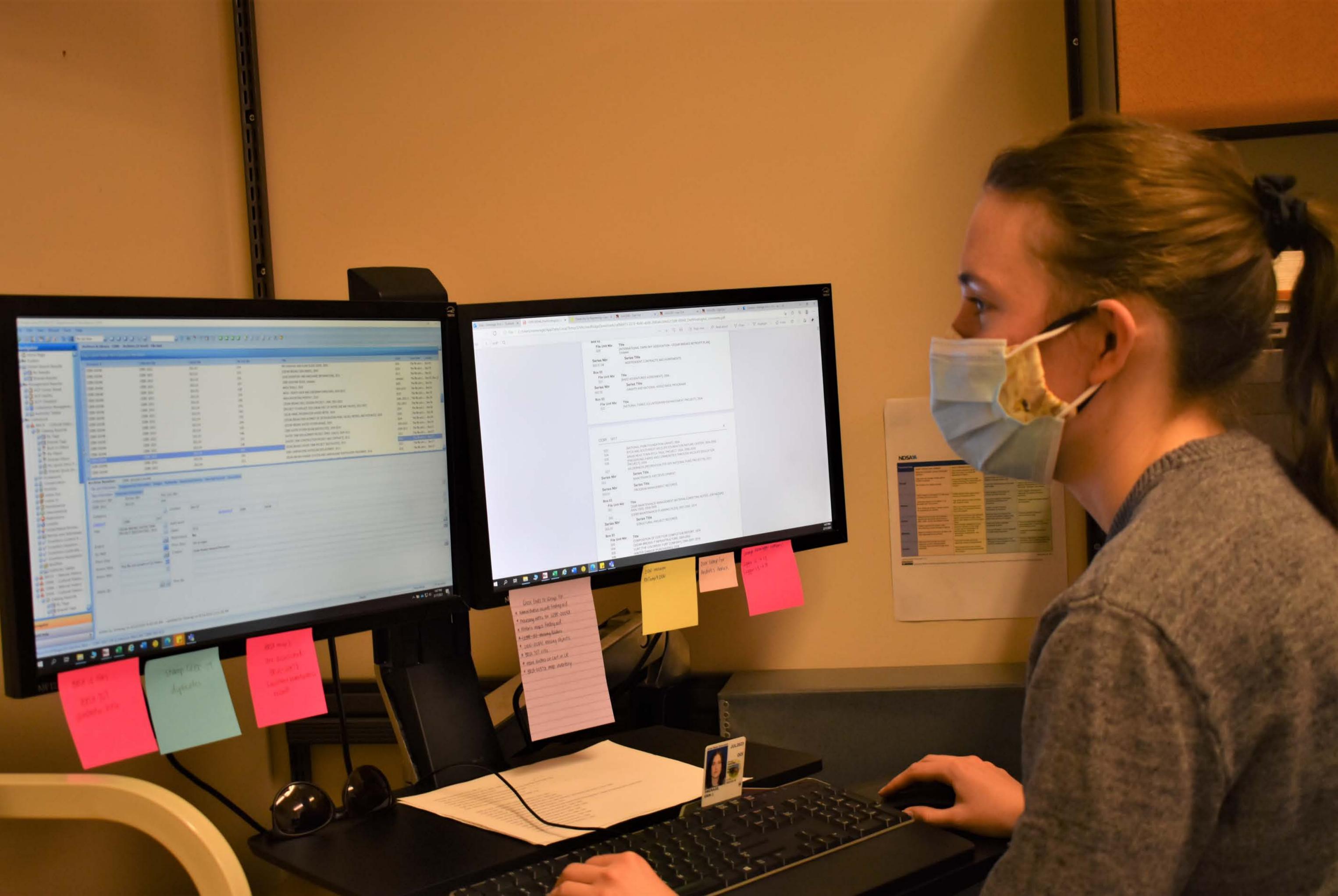
METRO



Zion National Park  
Accession # 2000-00112  
Collection # 2000-102  
Location # METRO  
Date #  
Number #  
Field #







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10000010	10000010	10000010	10000010

File List Nbr	Series Title
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Colaptes auratus  
Flicker  
♂  
Museum of Natural History  
1916. J. A. Rehn (coll.)  
Spec. collected in the  
Tahiti region  
22.11.1916. 20.11.1916  
Total weight: 14g. 24g  
Tahiti  
1916

