Nicholas E. Collias papers, 1933-2008

Finding aid prepared by Kelly Besser under the supervision of Megan Hahn Fraser; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

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12-077 Center for Health Sciences, Box 951798
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Finding aid last modified on 25 April 2016.
Nicholas Elias Colllias, an internationally renowned zoology educator and ornithologist, was born in Chicago Heights, Illinois on July 29, 1914.

After the completion of his secondary education at private and public high schools in Illinois, Colllias entered the University of Chicago, majored in zoology and earned his B.S. degree in 1937. Following graduation, he was hired as a research technician by Professor W.C. Allee, an ecologist on the faculty, to study pecking order in chickens. This job led to several fellowships and inspired his doctoral dissertation. Colllias earned his Ph.D. degree in zoology in 1942.

Soon after the completion of his doctoral degree, Colllias was drafted into the U.S. Army, and served three and a half years. He finished his Army career as a medical research physiologist at the Aeromedical Research Station at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio.

After his discharge from the Army, he became a zoology instructor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he began his long term research program on the social behavior of birds. While at Wisconsin, Colllias met Elsie Cole who became his life and scientific research partner. Most professional colleagues and acquaintances knew them as Nick and Elsie. They married on December 21, 1948.

Their research dealt with bird behavior including social hierarchies such as pecking order, vocal communications and external constructions, notably nests. Much of their field research and experiments focused on weaverbirds and junglefowl. Nick and Elsie published numerous research articles, co-authored two books on nest building and were founding members of the Animal Behavior Society.
In 1953 they joined the biology faculty at Illinois College in Jacksonville where they remained until 1958 when Nick accepted a position with UCLA’s Department of Zoology. Collias worked at UCLA for 27 years until his retirement in 1985 as professor emeritus.

Nick and Elsie received the Elliott Coues Award for bird behavior research from the American Ornithologists Union in 1980 and the Margaret Morse Nice Medal for lifetime contributions to ornithology from the Wilson Ornithological Union in 1997. Elsie Collias died on December 17, 2006. Nick Collias died on April 28, 2010 at home in Van Nuys, California.

**Scope and Content**

The collection consists of materials related to Nicholas E. Collias’ work as a zoology educator, field biologist and published author of scientific research articles. Collias worked on his long term research program concerning the development of social behavior in birds with his wife, Elsie C. Collias. Their research is best known for its investigations of social hierarchies such as pecking order, vocal communications and external constructions, notably nests. The collection consists of field notes, manuscripts of research articles, correspondence, academic work related to his undergraduate and graduate degrees, teaching materials and records of professional involvement as a founding member of the Animal Behavior Society. The collection also contains publications issued by the United States Army Air Forces that Collias annotated during his service with the Army as a medical research physiologist.

**Organization and Arrangement**

The collection has been arranged in the following series:

- Field notes, 1950-2005
- Manuscripts and publications, 1950-2008
- Correspondence, 1933-2004
- Teaching and research materials, circa 1946-2004
- B.S. and Ph.D. notes, papers and thesis drafts, 1930-1948
- Professional organization records, 1958-2007
- United States Army Air Forces publications, 1943-1945

**Field notes. 1950-2005.**

**Scope and Content**

Research notes on bird behavior in the field and aviary, particularly on junglefowl and weaverbirds. Countries of field research include the United States, Canada, Africa and Asia. Materials include raw data, photographs, maps, sonograms, graphs, charts, summaries of experiments and audio cassettes of bird songs and calls.

- Box 1, Folder 7
- Box 7, Folder 39
- Box 1, Folder 22
- Box 1, Folder 23
- Box 1, Folder 24
- Box 1, Folder 25
- Box 7, Folders 29, 31
- Box 1, Folder 26
- Box 1, Folder 35
- Box 1, Folder 38
- Box 1, Folder 39
- Box 1, Folder 40
- Box 7, Folders 30, 33-34,40-44
- Box 1, Folder 43
- Box 1, Folder 49
- Box 1, Folder 50
- Box 1, Folder 51-52
- Aviary 1 & 3 maps, nest and egg records. 1968-1969.
- Weaver nest selection. 1966.
- Rubble nest raw data. circa 1979.
- Testosterone injection of weaverbirds. 1962.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td><strong>Weaverbirds, hormones. 1959-1961.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td><strong>Weavers, Aviary 1 &amp; 2, E.S. Tarvyd. 1963.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td><strong>Aviary 2, R. J. Barfield. 1961.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td><strong>Village weaver sonogram images and photos. 1961-1997.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td><strong>Field checklists and photos. circa 1960s-1980s.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td><strong>Ratite chicks sonograms, slides and photos. 1957-2001.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td><strong>Indoor Aviary 1, Barfield &amp; Indoor Aviary 2, Frumkes. 1960-1961.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td><strong>Outdoor Aviary 1, Tarvyd. 1959, 1961.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td><strong>Outdoor Aviary 1, Tarvyd &amp; Outdoor Aviary 2, Frumkes. 1960-1962.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>62</td>
<td><strong>Aviary 1, Brian Kahn. 1961.</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Aviary 1 and Vivarium, Burrows. 1959-1960.</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Nest photographs. undated.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Seattle data summaries of old age in weavers. 1976-1980.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>Rubble nest experiment. 1976-1977.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>Non Ploceinae, East Africa. 1973.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3   | 26     | Scope and Content
One box of index cards. |
| 3   | 26     | **Weaverbirds comparative field study. 1956-1957.** |
| 3   | 26     | Scope and Content
One box of index cards. |
| 3   | 26     | **Ploceus (Textor) cucullatus. 1956-1957.** |
| 3   | 26     | Scope and Content
One box of index cards. |
| 3   | 26     | **Weaverbirds, Kenya. 1978.** |
| 3   | 26     | Scope and Content
One box of index cards. |
| 3   | 26     | **T.C.C., Senegal. 1967.** |
| 3   | 26     | Scope and Content
One box of index cards. |
| 3   | 26     | **Tapes of bird songs and calls. 1977-2001.** |
| 3   | 26     | Scope and Content
Fourteen cassette tapes. |
| 5   | 1-6    | **Weaverbirds UCLA aviaries. 1978-1980.** |
| 5   | 8-10   | **Village weaver branch and nest experiments. 2003.** |
| 6   | 1      | **Malibu Creek Lagoon. 1984-1986.** |

**Scope and Content**

- Box 5: Two shoe boxes of Collias's research note cards.
- Box 7: Collias's notes, data and graphs.
Field notes. 1950-2005.

Hypophysectomized chicks. 1950-1951.


Female weaver hormone experiments. 1964-1967.


Weaver seasonal control. 1966-1969.
Aviary 2. 1964.
Aviary maps. 1964.
California field trip maps, brochures and notes. 1958-2005.

Weaver finch water economy charts. undated.

Female wing length for different races of Ploceus cucullatus. 1993.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias
The art work from this article was used for an exhibit in 2002.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias for The Birds of Africa. Materials also include reference literature and correspondence.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias
Materials also include photocopies of articles by invitation for the revision of Sir Landsborough's A New Dictionary of Birds, British Onithologist's Union and others prepared for press such as "Old Age and Breeding Behavior in 14 to 20-Year Old African Weaverbirds" and "Social Behavior of Unconfined Red Junglefowl" by Collias and his wife, Elsie C. Collias.


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias
Materials also include "Seeking to Understand the Living Bird" by Nick and Elsie and "Inheritance of Egg-Color Polymorphism in the Village Weaver" by Elsie.


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias, Ronald J. Barfield and Edward S. Tarvyd
Folder 44 includes correspondence with The Auk Editor-in-Chief, Kimberly G. Smith.
Folder 45 includes correspondence with Martin Daly, Executive Editor for Behaviour: An International Journal of Behavioural Biology.

Weaver poster paper. circa 2000.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias

Biographical sketch and statement of research. undated.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias
Materials include Red Junglefowl field notes collected in Malay Peninsula of Thailand.

The Role of American Zoologists and Ethologists in the Development of Ethology During the Three Decades Preceding the Formation of the ABS. circa 1978.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias
Includes photo used for the cover of this book.

Nest and Mate Selection by the Female Village Weaverbird. 1978-1979.

Scope and Content
Nicholas E. Collias’s response to Peter Garson's critique in Animal Behavior of two of his articles on sexual selection in Ploceus cucullatus.

The Importance of the Male, His Territory and His Nest in Mate Selection by the Female Village Weaver, a Tropical Passerine Bird. 2007.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias, Florence McAlary McFarland, Catherine Jacobs, Janice McLean, and Cathleen Cox.


Scope and Content
Margaret Morse Nice Medal lecture by Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias.


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias
Materials include related notes, tables, statistics, photos, slides, correspondence with Dr. Walter D. Koenig and Dr. Glenn E. Walsberg, Editors, The Condor and drafts of Collias’s manuscript Ovenbirds (Furnariidae, Passeriformes) and the Origin of the Passerine Bird Nest.

Argentine trip talk. 1990.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias

Size Breeding Colony Related to Attraction of Mates in a Tropical Passerine Bird. 1969.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias
The Male and the Nest in Mate Selection by a Female Weaverbird. 1975-1977, 2001-2008.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias
Materials include research and editorial correspondence, data, multiple drafts, photos of male and female weaverbirds and their nests. Manuscript name changed to "The Male, His Territory and His Nest in Mate Selection by the Female Village Weaver, a Tropical Passerine Bird" with additional authors: Florence McAlary McFarland, Catherine Jacobs, Janice McClean and Cathleen Cox.


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
Materials include outlines for talks and manuscripts by Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias. Folder also contains clippings from magazines and newspapers.


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias and Elsie C. Collias

The Ecological Bases of Animal Behavior. undated.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias


Scope and Content
By Elsie C. Collias


Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias

The Spectrographic Analysis of Sound Signals of the Domestic Fowl. 1953.

Scope and Content
Folder 23: One spectrogram photo and two photocopies of baby chick pleasure and distress notes used for article.
Folder 38-39: Article by Nicolas E. Collias and Martin Joos with related notes and publications on vocal communication in birds.

Some Aspects of Comparative Sociology in Mammals. circa 1952.

Scope and Content
By Nicholas E. Collias, Illinois College, Jacksonville, Illinois.


Scope and Content
Manuscript by Nicholas E. Collias for submission to American Institute of Biological Sciences.
Correspondence. 1933-2004.

Scope and Content
Professional and personal letters to and from Collias.

Box 1, Folder 2 Members of the Section and Division of Animal Behavior and Sociobiology. 1963-1964.

Scope and Content
Letters related to the formation of an American Animal Behavior Society.

Stuart Keith, Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History. 1994
August 24-2004 August 13.
Nigel Redman, Christopher Helm. 2002 September 24.

Scope and Content
Correspondence includes reprints pertaining to the biology of Mountain White-crowned Sparrows on the breeding grounds.

Box 1, Folder 28 Cathleen Cox, Los Angeles Zoo. 1994 March 28.

Scope and Content
Correspondence includes Cox's article "Pair Formation in California Condors."

Box 1, Folders 29, 41 R.J. Barfield, Department of Biology, Livingston College. 1978, 2000.

Scope and Content
Folder 29 materials include Barfield's article, "Autoradiographic Localization of Androgen-Concentrating Cells in the Brain of the Male Domestic Fowl." Folder 41 includes Barfield's personal photos annotated by Collias.

Box 1, Folder 30 Oris Payton, Malibu Garden Club. 1985 October 30.

Scope and Content
Collias taught Biology at Chicago City Junior College and Amherst College in 1946. From 1947-1951 he was a Zoology instructor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he began his research on the development of social behavior in birds. He joined the biology faculty at Illinois College, Jacksonville from 1953-1958 where he chaired the department. Finally, he moved to Los Angeles to work within UCLA's Department of Zoology for 27 years until he retired as Professor Emeritus in 1985. Materials include Collias's curriculum, assessments, syllabi, lecture and research notes, grant applications and related correspondence.

Box 1, Folder 3 Biology 1B. 1976.

Scope and Content
UCLA lecture notes for a class dealing with organisms and populations.


Scope and Content
Folder 13 also includes exams and answer keys for Zoology 164, 237 and 217.
Box 2, Folders 32-37

Box 6, Folder 32
- Sociobiology Seminar. 1975.

Box 7, Folder 5

Box 7, Folder 6
  Scope and Content
  Collias's notes on possible research projects and experiments for graduate students.

Box 7, Folder 7
- General notes on behavior and genetics. circa 1946.
- Concept of levels notes. undated.
- Weaverbird literature notes. undated.
- Activation of Copulatory Behavior by Androgen Implanted into the Preoptic Area of the Male Fowl. circa 1967.
  Scope and Content
  By Ronald J. Barfield

Box 8, Folder 32-33
  Scope and Content
  Box 1: Development and Physiology of Adaptive Behavior Patterns.
  Box 8: Comparative Studies of Signal Function and Structure.
  Box 9: Experimental Analysis of Vocal Communication Among Birds.

Box 8, Folders 29, 32-33
- UCLA Faculty Grant Program proposal. 1999-2004.
  Scope and Content
  Folder 29: Analysis of Social Behavior in Birds.
  Folder 32: Analysis of Social Behavior and Communication in Birds.
  Folder 33-34: Analysis of Social Behavior and Vocal Communication in Birds.

Box 9, Folder 35-36, 38-39
  Scope and Content
  Analysis of Social Behavior and Vocal Communication in Birds.

Box 9, Folder 41
- National Institutes of Health Research and Training Grants application. 1956.

Box 1, Folder 41
- Douglas Oliver, Professor, Harvard University. 1961 March 22.
  Scope and Content
  Letter attached to Oliver's article, "An Ethnographer's Method for Formulating Descriptions of 'Social Structure.'"

Box 2, Folder 2
- George A. Bartholomew. 1998.

Box 2, Folder 8
- Dr. Thomas E. Martin, Editor-In-Chief, The Auk. 1997 April 7.

Box 4, Folder 12
- Jane G. Pisano, President and Director, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. 2004 March 10.

Box 2, Folder 22
- Martin W. Schein, Smithsonian Institution Archives. 1995 October 17.
  Scope and Content

Box 6, Folder 1
- E.J. Kraus, Department of Botany, University of Chicago. 1933 February.

Box 6, Folder 30
- Dr. V.E. Hall, Department of Physiology, UCLA. 1966 November.

Box 7, Folder 16
- Nancy Masters, Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Arizona University. 1975-1977.

Box 8, Folder 2
Correspondence. 1933-2004.

| Box 8, Folder 3 | Researchers of the Red Junglefowl. 1953-1996. |
| Box 8, Folder 19 | National Park Service. 1971 April 23. |
| Box 8, Folder 20, 25 | Ed Tarvyd, Professor of Zoology, Santa Monica College. 1980 December. |
| Box 8, Folders 23-24, 26 | Professor Henry J. Thompson, Chairman, UCLA Department of Biology. 1972 November 15. |
| Box 8, Folder 30 | Scope and Content |
| Box 8, Folder 37 | Attachments include Biographical Sketch of Elsie C. Collias. |

| Box 8, Folder 19 | Scope and Content |
| Box 8, Folder 20, 25 | Materials concern Collias's book on the ecological foundations of animal behavior. |

| Box 9, Folders 54-60 | Journal manuscript authors. 1965-1995. |
| Box 9, Folder 61 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 43-49 | Correspondence concerning Collias's reviews of journal manuscripts for various publications including The Auk, The Condor and Animal Behaviour. |

| Box 1, Folder 1 | Edwin W. Snider, Secretary, National Geographic Society. 1984-1985. |
| Box 9, Folder 35 | B.S. and Ph.D. notes, papers and thesis drafts. 1930-1948. |
| Box 9, Folder 36 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | Materials include Collias's academic papers, research notes and thesis drafts while pursuing his B.S. and Ph.D. degrees in zoology at the University of Chicago. |

| Box 9, Folder 36 | The Origin, Evolution and Classification of Birds. circa 1938. |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 20, 25 | By Nicholas E. Collias |

| Box 9, Folder 36 | Field studies of social behavior. 1930-1948. |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 36 | Collias's notes on various field experiments and research articles. |

| Box 9, Folder 36 | Significance of social dominance in vertebrates. 1930-1948. |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 20, 25 | Collias's notes on articles concerning social dominance. Materials include "Group Organization Among Vertebrates" paper by Collias's mentor, Professor W.C. Allee. |

| Box 9, Folder 42 | Collias Review of Nicholson. 1938. |
| Box 9, Folders 43-49 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | By Nicholas E. Collias, University of Chicago |

| Box 9, Folders 43-49 | Statistical Analysis of Factors Which Make for Success in Initial Encounters Between Hens. circa 1940-1942. |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | Scope and Content |
| Box 9, Folder 42 | PhD thesis drafts by Nicholas E. Collias, University of Chicago. Prior title: Aggressive Behavior Among Vertebrate Animals; Some Implications and a Statistical Analysis |

Scope and Content

Collias was active in a number of professional scientific societies concerning the behavior of animals, specifically birds. He was a founding member of the Animal Behavior Society (ABS) and in 1964-1965 he chaired the committee that wrote the ABS constitution. Materials include abstracts, programs, newsletters, studies, posters, surveys, lists of fellows, awards and honors.

Box 1, Folder 19

Box 1, Folder 31

Box 1, Folder 32

Box 1, Folder 33

Box 1, Folder 36

Box 2, Folder 13

Box 2, Folder 20

Box 4, Folder 64
Cooper Ornithological Program and ALBS paper. 1961.

Box 6, Folder 31
International Ornithological Congress Program. 1962.

Box 8, Folder 9

Box 8, Folder 27-28
Entomological societies' newsletters. circa 1989.

Box 8, Folder 36

Box 8, Folder 22

Box 6, Folder 2

Box 4, Folder 65
Outline of Neuropsychiatry in Aviation Medicine. circa 1944.

Box 4, Folder 66

Box 4, Folder 65
Notes on Men and Groups Under Stress of Combat: For the Use of Flight Surgeons in Operational Units. 1945.

Box 4, Folder 65
Care of Personnel in the Wet Tropics. 1944.

Box 4, Folder 66
Living Off the Land. circa 1943.

Box 4, Folder 66
Living Off the Southwest Pacific Tropics. 1944.

Box 4, Folder 66
High Altitude Frostbite. 1943.

Box 4, Folder 66

Box 4, Folder 66

Box 4, Folder 66
Your Body in Flight. 1943.