



Updated Data Entry Standard for Multiple Sires and Dams
Topic originally discussed on pp. 63-66 of *Standards for Data Entry and Maintenance of North American Zoo and Aquarium Animal Records Databases, 1998*

AZA's Institutional Data Management Advisory Group
Data Entry Standards Task Force

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Note: The information contained in this document is not current and is in the process of being revised by the AZA IDMAG.

While ARKS3 allowed only a single entry for a sire or dam, ARKS4 allows the user to individually record any number of possible parents. This usually eliminates the need for the designations UNKx and MULTx since the user can now list all possible parents. The concept that parents of births at the recording facility (i.e. your institution) are 'unknown' – a common but incorrect practice – is no longer valid, since all possible parents in the collection at the time of conception should be listed. UNKx should now be restricted to the recording of multiple offspring of unknown parents at other institutions, usually non-ISIS facilities.

Data entry procedure

- At initial entry, record the first set of parents and their institution codes in the appropriate <SIRE> or <DAM> and <LOCATION> fields. Continue completing the remainder of the record and save it. Then return to the [SPECIMEN] tab and edit the <SIRE> and <DAM> fields as below.
- Using the birth/hatch date of the specimen, enter an additional parent accession number and institution mnemonic in the appropriate field (<SIRE> and <DAM> fields on the [SPECIMEN] tab). Saving after each addition is suggested. After verification of the entry, continue adding other parents in the same manner until all possible parents have been entered.

Important things to remember

- Any parent should be recorded only once in the <SIRE> and <DAM> fields.
 - If a parent animal has more than one identity, e.g. has an accession number at more than one institution, enter the recording (your) institution's accession numbers and mnemonic in the <SIRE> and <DAM> fields as suggested on p.

63 of the Standards. Adding to the <SIRE> and <DAM> fields additional identifications at other institutions which refer to a parent *already recorded* causes ARKS4 to interpret them as different, therefore multiple, sires or dams. Identities at any other locations are entered on the [NOTES] tab, using the Dam/Sire Elsewhere note (code SX).

- When one parent does not have an accession number at the recording facility, e.g. a birth on loan out, enter the other institution's accession number and mnemonic in the appropriate parent field.
- The accession number entered in the <ID> field must be the number at the facility entered in the <LOCATION> field.

Special cases

- **Unknown gender.** If the gender of a possible parent has not or cannot be determined, enter the accession number and institution mnemonic in both the <SIRE> and <DAM> fields. Currently when creating the initial new record, this must be done in two steps: first, enter one parent accession number and mnemonic in either the <SIRE> or <DAM> field and enter UNK and mnemonic in the other parent field. (When saved, the program will display a message that the sex is not as expected, but the entry will be accepted.) Then return and replace the UNK entry with the ID number of the unknown-gender parent. Subsequent unknown-gender parents may be added without having to resort to the temporary use of UNK.
- **Group records.** When the parents are part of a group (group accession number) and the offspring is/are removed from the group and individually identified, record the group accession number and institution mnemonic in both the <SIRE> and <DAM> fields as noted above. The program will return a message that the parent is not the expected gender, but the entry will be accepted. If the offspring remain in the group, merely record a birth event on the [VISITS] tab, entering the total number of offspring in the Count column. Any other information can be recorded in the visit note for that transaction and/or in a Birth Note (code NB).

A current taxon report includes only a notation that multiple sires or dams are recorded but does not include a list of these parents. Therefore, it is also suggested that a "Possible parents" note (code NP) be entered in the specimen record, listing all possible parents; use the birth/hatch date as the note date. If there are multiple offspring in a birth/hatch, also enter a "Litter/Clutch" note (code TL), listing all the offspring of this birth/clutch; again, use the date of birth/hatch. Both of these notes can be added to the records of all relevant offspring using the Batch Notes option (on the Main menu, select Batch, then Notes). Since this information is important to studbook keepers or others using that report for genetic management, "Possible parents" and "Litter/Clutch" notes should be included on all taxon reports requested for such use. (These are selected on the [IDENTIFIER SELECTION] and [NOTES SELECTION] tabs of the Reports Menu.)

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