**Opening the thoracic cavity of the mink**

1. Place your mink ventral surface up on the dissecting tray.
2. Begin cutting from the opening in the neck down through the thoracic cavity using scissors. Keep the scissor tips up as not to damage any underlying organs.
3. When you reach the sternum, cut parallel either to the right or left of the sternum, cutting through the costal cartilages.
4. You will reach an “dead end” at the bottom of the ribs. This is the diaphragm.
5. Cut a horizontal incision just anterior to the diaphragm, down each side of the body. This should create flaps.
6. Open the flaps to expose the thoracic cavity (this may break ribs which is ok), while pushing the diaphragm down into the abdomen with your hands, leaving the diaphragm intact.
7. Use large dissecting pins to hold the flaps of the thoracic wall open.
8. Dispose of any fat into the garbage can. Do not wash solid waste down the drain!

**Circulation in the Mink**

NOTES: **When you photograph, the head should be at the top of the picture and the mink should always be in anatomical position.**

1. Locate the heart. There is tissue at the base of the heart. This is the thymus gland. Pin it and photograph.

Thymus gland (Pin color \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

1. The heart is covered in the pericardial sac (pericardium). With tweezers lift the pericardium and take a photo.

Pericardium (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

1. Cut and remove the pericardium to expose the heart. Do not remove the heart and be careful not to cut any blood vessels.
2. Identify the following parts of the heart and photograph. Do not try to photograph all of them at the same time! right atrium (auricle) and pin it. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

right ventricle (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

left atrium (auricle) and pin it. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

left ventricle (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

superior vena cava and pin it. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

coronary arteries and veins (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

left and right pulmonary arteries (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

pulmonary veins. You may have to lift and look under the heart. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

1. Identify the ascending aorta as it exits the left ventricle. It is very short and almost immediately becomes the aortic arch. Place a pin in the aortic arch. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
2. The aortic arch has two branches. The brachiocephalic artery is the first branch (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and the left subclavian (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) is the second. Pin these.
3. Locate the trachea and identify the following blood vessels nearby: left common carotid artery. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_), right common carotid artery. (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and right subclavian (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_), internal jugular veins (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_), external jugular veins (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). Photograph these.
4. Near the bottom of the trachea you will see where the superior vena cava branches into the right and left brachiocephalic veins (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_).
5. Lift the heart and follow the aortic arch as it descends and forms the descending aorta. Follow the descending aorta and notice where it passes through the diaphragm. The inferior vena cava also passes through the diaphragm. The third tube passing through the diaphragm is the esophagus. Make sure you can distinguish between the three of these. Pin the descending aorta (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and the inferior vena cava (Pin color\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and photograph them.