

UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

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Title: Husbandry Care of Birds

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for birds (species of the Psittacopasserae clade).

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for birds used in agricultural research and teaching must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals Used in Research (*Ag Guide*). Birds used in biomedical research and non-standard agricultural teaching must additionally meet the requirements in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*), and Public Health Service Policy (*PHS*). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

Daily (365 days a year without exception):

- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (*Guide* pg. 112).
- Ensure adequate feed and potable water is available (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Record sick and dead animals, and report them to Campus Veterinary Services (CVS) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals.
- Record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
 - Temperature range for birds is species-dependent.
 - Humidity range for birds is 30% to 70% (*Guide* pg. 44).
- Spot clean excessively soiled or flooded areas of housing (*Guide* pg. 70).
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of tasks, initial, and date log sheet.

Weekly:

- Clean cages, feeders and waterers (*Guide* pg. 70).
- Replace bedding for animals in solid-bottom caging/housing.
- Clean footbaths, as applicable.

As needed:

- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (if possible) (*Guide* pg. 72).

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- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Chow must be discarded after 6 months of the milling date unless manufacturer guidelines recommend a shorter or longer expiration date (*Guide* pg. 66).
- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Guide* pg. 67).
- Trim excessively long toenails and beaks per facility SOP.

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy.
- Birds should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate species typical behavior. Examples of enrichment for birds include conspecifics and nest boxes.
- Devices must be checked regularly for wear and discarded when safety hazards are observed.

Facilities:

- Temperature alarms must be installed in all temperature-controlled rooms housing birds (*Guide* pg. 143).
- Adequate ventilation must be provided for the health and comfort of the animal at all times.
 - A minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges per hour shall be provided in animal housing areas (*Guide* pg. 46).
- Floors shall be moisture-resistant, non-absorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth (*Guide* pg. 137). Refer to Physical Plant and Facilities Maintenance policy.

Housing:

- Whenever possible, birds should be socially housed in compatible groups (*Guide* pg. 51).
- Floor space taken up by food bowls, water containers, and enrichment devices should not be considered part of the floor space (*Guide* pg. 56).
- Space requirements for pigeons, and recommended for other birds:

Weight (kg)	Floor Area/Animal (ft ²)	Height (in)
--	0.8	Cage height should be sufficient for the animals to comfortably stand erect with their feet on the floor.
(<i>Guide</i> pg. 60)		

When housing this species, please also refer to the Animal Care Program's Standards of Care Policy on Pest Control, Identification and Labeling of Cages, Environmental Enrichment, Food Storage, House-Keeping in Facilities Housing Biomedical Research Animals, Physical Plant Facilities Maintenance, as well as the IACUC's Policy on Social Housing of Social Species.