

Policy: SC-34-200
Date: 6/9/2025
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ILAR/ FASS
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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 excluding raptors, poultry, and waterfowl.

II. Policy:

Birds used in research and teaching must meet the requirements in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*). Additionally, wild caught birds and birds not bred for research must meet the requirements set forth by the USDA (AWA). Deviations or exceptions from the Guide 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 findings 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 each task, initial each task, and date the log.

Weekly (not to exceed 7 days):

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

As needed:

- Each facility will develop their own best practices for sanitization at least every 6 months, whenever there is a change in species, or more frequently if needed.
 - Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (if possible) (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Guide* pg. 67). Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).

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- Chow must be discarded after 6 months of the milling date unless manufacturer guidelines recommend a shorter or longer expiration date (*Guide* pg. 66).
- Trim excessively long toenails and beaks per facility SOPs.
- Each facility will develop their own best practices for sanitization of the macroenvironment typically occurring every 6 months or whenever there is a change in species

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy (SOC-30-102).

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 SOC 50-102.

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)		