

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
FOR  
QUARANTINE OF BIRDS  
(Parakeets and finches)

1.0 Purpose:

The purpose of this SOP is to outline procedures for screening newly acquired birds for zoonotic diseases, and for personnel protection. The primary zoonotic risk from birds is Psittacosis (also called Ornithosis, Parrot Fever, Chlamydiosis). It is caused by the organism *Chlamydia psittici* which is secreted in nasal secretions, blood, and feces. Aerosolizations from the care, handling, and necropsy of birds are the primary mode of transmission to humans. Birds can shed the organism under stress (after shipping) without showing clinical signs of illness.

All staff and principal investigators must attend a training session on the zoonotic risks and proper protection required. Symptoms related to human infection from chlamydia will be discussed. Any persons in contact with birds that do develop “flu-like symptoms” should discuss the possibility of Chlamydia infection with their physician. Immune compromised individuals should be restricted from handling quarantined birds.

2.0 Scope:

This SOP applies to all CMLAF veterinary and husbandry staff working with parakeets and finches during quarantine, as well as individuals who own, breed, work or are in contact with birds.

3.0 Procedures:

3.1 Quarantine Housing:

- A. Newly arrived birds will be quarantined in BSL-2 facilities for a minimum of 45 days
- B. Birds will be singly housed during this time.
- C. Birds from different sources (pet stores) will be housed in separate rooms

3.2 Personnel Protective Clothing:

- A. Personnel will don gloves, gown, shoe covers, and NIOSH N-95 dust-mist mask upon entry to BSL 2
- B. A second pair of gloves will be worn over the 1<sup>st</sup> pair and removed again upon exiting the bird room.
- C. Entry to other rooms within the BSL-2 facility is prohibited unless all protective clothing is changed.
- D. Protective clothing will be removed upon exit from BSL-2 and hands must be washed. Gloves and gown in possible contact with

birds/cages/bedding should be removed at exit from quarantine room to prevent contamination of surfaces/materials outside the primary containment room.

3.3 Physical Examination:

- A. All newly acquired birds will have a physical examination within 24 hours of arrival
- B. Physical Examination will include:
  - 1. Overall visual inspection for signs of coughing, sneezing, diarrhea, mouth breathing, ruffled feathers, lethargy, crusting of feet/cere, lameness, inability to fly.
  - 2. Palpation of breast muscle and keel bone for body condition score.
  - 3. Examination of feathers and skin for mites or lice
  - 4. Body Weight (gms)

3.4 Diagnostic Tests:

- A. Chlamydiosis:
  - 1. Sterile culturette manufactured by Becton Dickinson or equivalent (must not contain a gel based transport media), or sterile dry swab is required.
  - 2. A choanal swab is collected by inserting a sterile swab into the mouth
  - 3. A cloaca swab is collected by inserting the same swab as above into cloaca &/or completely coating swab with FRESH feces
    - a. Samples are submitted to University of Georgia, Infectious Diseases Laboratory (Appendix 1)
- B. Intestinal Parasites:
  - 1. Fresh feces are collected individually from each bird for fecal floats. Tapeworms (finches) and roundworms are examined.

3.5 Treatments:

- A. Air Sac Mites
  - 1. Each Finch will receive 200-1000 ug/kg of Ivermectin PO as a prophylactic treatment.
  - 2. The dose is extruded onto the bevel of a blunt needle of a syringe and placed inside bird's mouth when it opens to peck at syringe. Treatment will be repeated in 3 weeks and annually thereafter.
  - 3. Birds will be monitored for 1 hour post- treatment for signs of overdose including sleepiness, difficulty standing, and drooping head.

- B. Knemidokoptic mange:
  - 1. Each Parakeet will receive 200 ug/kg PO or IM Ivermectin, once only (as a prophylactic treatment).
  - 2. Signs of overdose as described in 3.5.A.3 will be monitored for.
- C. Chlamydiosis
  - 1. All birds that test positive for Chlamydia psittaci MUST be reported to the USDA as a “Reportable Disease”.
  - 2. If treatment is to be administered, all birds from the same source and housed in same room will undergo 45 days of antibiotic therapy as outlined:
  - 3. Doxycycline at 75-100 mg/kg IM once a week for 7 treatments.

### 3.6 Necropsy Procedures:

- A. Birds must be euthanized within quarantine facilities (BSL 2)
- B. The carcass must be sealed in plastic bag and outside surface sprayed with disinfectant prior to being removed from BSL 2
- C. All birds found dead or euthanized during quarantine must be necropsied
- D. Carcass are to be necropsied in PM room 319
- E. The carcass must be wetted with detergent/disinfectant solution prior to PM to reduce aerosols.
- F. Gloves, gown, and NIOSH N-95 dust mist mask must be worn .
- G. Finches will have the trachea flushed with saline for microscopic examination, and lungs and trachea submitted for histological examination for air sac mites.

### 3.7 Release From Quarantine:

- A. Quarantine will be completed in 45 days, or longer if birds are undergoing treatment.
- B. Release from quarantine will be granted by the veterinarian. A satisfactory health status, and a negative Chlamydia test (or 45 days of treatment) will be deemed appropriate for release to the Principle Investigator for use in research.

**HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES INFORMATION SHEET**

Name of Hazard: Chlamydia psittici

Nature of Hazard: Zoonotic  
(Chemical, Infectious, Radioactive, etc.)

Level of Precautions Required: Moderate  
(Minor, Moderate, High)

Protective Clothing Required: (Check that which is needed.)

X Masks - N-95 White respirator

X Gloves

X Outer Garment: Lab Coat \_\_\_\_ or Gown X

Disposable Coveralls \_\_\_\_\_

Goggles \_\_\_\_\_

Head Cover X

Shoe Covers X

Special Instructions: (Describe as needed—waste removal, cage changing, etc.)