

Public Workshop for Proposed Animal Care Standards

Bird Workshop Minutes

March 6, 2011, 3:30 – 5 PM

Scope of Workshop:

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss specific animal care standards for birds, including poultry and pet birds. There were two participants, one from the Anchorage Animal Control Board and one interested citizen who works for the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District, which sometimes assists the public in resolving animal manure disposal issues. Comments or questions are from participants unless noted as by DEC.

1. OPEN Item: Housing and cage standards. Pet birds live longer lives than most poultry and the many varieties of species. Their needs may differ from domestic poultry. Comments will be taken on cage size requirements pet birds (as opposed to poultry). One example of another state's regulations for pet birds was listed below for participants to consider.

b. bird Cages. Primary enclosures for birds (cages) shall be maintained in good repair and constructed of metal or other water resistant material which can be cleaned and sanitized.

(1) Minimum Space Requirements

- a) The cage must be large enough to provide full body extension without contact with the confines. The cage must be wide enough in at least one direction to accommodate completely stretched wings.
- b) A single well-placed perch may be adequate for Psittacines ie., the bird can stand completely upright on the perch without having the head contact the ceiling of the cage and at the same time not having the tail contact the floor or grate. For those species, such as Finches, Canaries, etc. that prefer flying or jumping to climbing, two perches, one at each end of the cage, must be provided. Perches must be strategically placed to prevent droppings from contaminating other birds and the birds' food and water and to also prevent the bird's tail from coming into contact with the food and water.

- c) Minimum space requirements for multiple birds housed temporarily depends on the calculated Housing Density Factor and the overall length of the bird as measured from the tip of the tail to the top of the head.

The following calculation will be used to determine the number of birds that can be housed in a given cage:

$L \times W \times H \div \text{Density Factor} = \text{total length of birds permitted.}$

$\text{Total length of birds permitted} \div \text{length of bird} = \text{number of birds allowed in that size cage.}$

Housing Density Factor Table:

Species:	Each bird's overall length (in.)	Density Factor
Finch	3	60
Parakeet	8	50
Cockatiel	9-12	60
Cockatiel-type	9-12 (heavier body)	75
Amazon	13-24	325
Cockatoo	25-35	800
Macaw	34-45	1400

Cage measurements are based on the actual living space and do not include T-stands or perches attached to the outside of the cage or the space below the cage grate.

- d) For birds housed over 60 days, the Density Factor should be doubled for birds 12 inches in overall length or less. For birds housed over 90 days, the Density Factor shall be doubled for birds 12 inches in overall length or less.
- e) All cage accessories (ladders, toys, perches, etc.) made of unsealed wood shall be cleaned daily and replaced as often as necessary to maintain sanitary conditions

- No public comments were made on these standards.
- *DEC Comment:* In reviewing other state regulations regarding birds, most addressed poultry, not pet birds. We have not observed or heard of significant problems regarding pet bird (or poultry) enclosures. Pet stores with many birds in one cage that we have seen are quite spacious. Alaska does not have any large scale poultry

operations. Alaskan poultry owners typically keep their birds in large aviary type spaces or free ranging with coops.

2. OPEN Item: Separate set of standards for pet birds. At the last meeting, several participants suggested that a separate set of standards for pet birds might be warranted. The DEC has reviewed many other state regulations and they are typically written to address poultry operations. Comments were welcomed on possible separate standards and how they might differ from the first draft of “poultry oriented” standards.
 - No comments were made on this topic. During the meeting we discussed several general questions on topics that might apply to all bird species.

3. OPEN Item: Lack of shelter. Previous comments described problems with birds not being provided adequate shelter from cold. The poultry and general care standards section of the draft do not yet contain specific verbiage on bird shelter. One possible approach is to generally require protection from hypothermia, hyperthermia, precipitation, and snow, etc.
 - No specific public comments were made on shelter.
 - *DEC Comment:* An endpoint measured approach to adequate shelter seems most appropriate. For instance, attempting to specifically define how warm coop should be cannot very well assure its function. Chickens might actually be allowed access to a coop/shelter, yet still choose to stay outdoors long enough to get frostbite on their combs and waddles.

4. OPEN Item: Transportation. Previous comments and questions discussed general safety during transportation, expected mortality rates for large shipments, and carrier construction to prevent escape. The Code of Federal Regulations contains no transportation welfare requirements for birds. It only addresses quarantine facilities. Other state regulations have been reviewed and very few specifics have been found. Examples were listed below. Comments on these approaches and others were welcomed.
 - The density in poultry conveyances must allow the birds to rest at the same time without being forced to rest on top of each other.
 - **Subd. 3. Transportation. Birds may be transported only in containers constructed of a smooth, durable material.** Containers must:

- be suitable for the species being shipped;
- be constructed to prevent escape or chewing of the container by the bird that may be injurious to the health of the bird;
- have ventilation on only one side to prevent cross drafts;
- provide enough space for the bird to stand up, turn around, and obtain necessary food, water, and roosting space;
- have fresh food and water available to the bird at all times if the shipping period exceeds four hours.

○ (For all animals):

603-015-0055 Animals in Transit

- 1) Pet animals when required to be shipped in crates shall be transported in crates constructed of a smooth, durable material which is easily cleaned and shall:
 - a. Have a solid floor which may have a false bottom;
 - b. Be so constructed as to provide maximum safety for the particular animal or animals being transported;
 - c. Have openings on two sides to assure adequate ventilation;
 - d. Crates shall be so constructed that food or water may be put through a small-type door without removing the animal from the crate in order that caretakers may feed and water when required;
 - e. Care and feeding instructions should be written out by the shipper and attached to the crate. Other precautions in handling the animal should also be given in case it becomes necessary to move the animal from the crate.
- 2) In all cases the crates shall be large enough to provide space for the pet animals to lie down in extended position and to allow ease of movement when standing or turning around. When the temperature is over 85 degrees F., increased space shall be provided to within reason.
- 3) The crate shall be cleaned before use for each trip.
- 4) Food and water containers shall be cleaned and sanitized before each trip.
- 5) If bedding is used it shall be clean, dry, and dust free.
- 6) The person or persons responsible for the welfare of the pet animal or animals while in transit shall:
 - a. Offer the pet animal food at least once every 24 hours;

- b. Offer all pet animals water at 12 hour intervals at least, except that water shall be offered at four-hour intervals when the temperature reaches 90 degrees F. or above;

Inspect each pet animal at four-hour intervals or oftener.

- What do Canada and airlines require? *DEC Comment:* We will research. (OPEN)
- How would any Alaskan regulations apply to birds flown into the state? *DEC Comment:* We will research. They probably would not be subject to Alaskan regs until landing. (OPEN)
- *DEC Comment:* It could be awkward to be too specific about transporting pet birds. Their needs for a short car ride to the veterinarian vs. a long plane trip would vary greatly and might also vary by size and species. The fact that one state has a requirement for two sided ventilation and another state requires one sided ventilation points out the need for flexibility. Structural integrity is important to prevent birds from pecking out of flimsy cardboard boxes, especially if they are larger birds and the box gets damp. (OPEN)