

Preparedness for Birds and Aviaries

Identification

Examples of appropriate identification for birds include leg bands, microchips, or tattoos.

Before a Disaster

1. If you own birds or exotic animals, make a list of the names, addresses, and phone numbers where you can get veterinary care, food, shelter, and housing for these animals in an emergency. Remember that not all facilities are equipped for or knowledgeable about handling exotics or birds. Some facilities require special health certificates, such as verification that the birds are psittacosis free. Find out what the facilities provide and what they would require.
2. Determine whether your birds need a continuous supply of power. For example, you may need to power incubators, hatchers, or brooders. Outdoor lighting may be necessary or beneficial to your birds if you have an aviary. Purchase a generator to meet the needs of your facilities. Make sure your generator is in good running condition by starting it monthly.
3. Make sure you have a sufficient water supply. Use large water containers with chlorinated water (10 drops of chlorine to each gallon of water to prohibit bacterial growth). Store water away from sunlight.
4. Aviaries should be equipped with an overhead sprinkler system. This is important to minimize smoke inhalation, cool the air, and reduce the chance of burn injuries.
5. Aviculturists should have enough carriers on hand to evacuate all birds. Many birds will run into their nest boxes during a crisis. Nest boxes in the flights can be used to transport birds. To facilitate this they should be installed with quick-release latches and a hinge-type cover over the entrance. This will enable you to remove the nest box and use it as a pet carrier immediately. Flights should be constructed to allow easy access.
6. Birds often require specialty foods. Make sure you know what these are and where you can get them. Although surplus food can often be refrigerated, this may not be possible in a disaster, if the power supply is out.
7. If vaccinations are appropriate for your bird, be sure they are up to date. Consult your veterinarian to learn which vaccinations are appropriate.
8. Birds should be tested and free of psittacosis and tuberculosis, which are serious diseases and are transmissible to many other animals and people.
9. Always keep exotic pets in separate rooms. Many exotic pets can be very dangerous to disaster personnel and other animals not familiar with them or encountering them unexpectedly. Leave warnings and handling instructions for all exotics, especially poisonous ones.