

CBBS Guide to First Aid for Birds Injured During Banding projects

If you suspect a bird is not healthy consider the following:

- Is it lethargic, depressed, fluffed up?
- Can it fly?
- Is it emaciated, thin? Feel the keel – it should be rounded. If it is concave, the bird should be **sent to AIWC**.
- Does it have a head or eye injury? Are its pupils responsive? Is the head tilting?
- Is it lame? Can it stand? Is balance an issue?
- Is a fracture or dislocation apparent?
- Is it heavily infested with ectoparasites (lice, maggots, blowflies, hippoboscids flies)?
- Is it gasping or otherwise seeming to struggle for breath?
- Is it bleeding? Is there discharge from cloaca, ears, nares?
- Is the crop compacted?
- Is there a bad smell associated with the bird?
- Is it dehydrated? Is the skin turgid? Are eyes sunken? Do mucous membranes appear dry and/or pale?
- Can it grip with its feet?

First Aid Suggestions and When to Send to Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) (403-946-2361)

Dehydration

If a bird seems dehydrated offer it water with a syringe or droplets on a fingertip. If necessary place it in a box and allow it to rest for up to ½ hour. If the bird does not freely fly away within ½ hour **send to AIWC** (preferably un-banded) for assessment and potential treatment.

Abrasions and Cuts

Clean cuts and abrasions with water and assess. If wound seems serious and/or requires sutures **send to AIWC** (preferably un-banded) for assessment and potential treatment. Cover the wound with non-stick gauze and hold in a darkened box for pick-up.

Fractures and dislocations

Keep broken bone wet, tuck exposed ends under skin. Wrap and immobilize, stabilize joints above and below the fracture. Use vetwrap, non-stick gauze, non-stick tape. Be careful not to restrict circulation. If wrapping a wing be careful not to constrict the patagium. **Send to AIWC** (preferably un-banded) for assessment and potential treatment.

Wing Strain (i.e. inability to fly)

This is a non-specific term. A serious cause is a fractured or displaced coracoid. In many other cases, ½ hour of rest in a darkened box is all that is needed. If the bird does not freely fly away within ½ hour **send to AIWC** (preferably un-banded) for assessment and potential treatment.

General Malaise

If a bird does not evidence specific symptoms but still seems to be unhealthy and/or weak, place it in a darkened box. If the bird does not freely fly away within ½ hour, **send to AIWC** (preferably un-banded) for assessment and potential treatment.