

Emergency Preparedness for Birds

The following items are recommended for inclusion in a disaster kit specifically for birds. Prepare one kit for each bird in your household.

Food and Water:

- One-month supply of pellets/seed mix
- Two-week supply of water
- Eight small jars of baby food/fruit in natural juice cups
- Supplements



Although normally a two-week supply of food is recommended, bird food is not a priority item for stores to restock after a disaster, so it is advisable to have a one-month supply on hand. Baby food is an excellent source of fruits and vegetables for birds when fresh produce is not available. However, read the label to ensure that there is not too much vitamin and mineral supplementation.

Housing and Transportation:

- Hard-sided pet carrier with low perch inside and contact details written in permanent ink
- Small cage with perches for safe housing
- Favorite toys
- Crocks for food and water
- Newspaper for lining cage

For safety, a bird should be transported in a hard-sided carrier, as cages can trap wings and legs if a bird panics during transport. However, once the destination has been reached, it is safer to transfer the bird into a secure, appropriately sized cage. Most birds when settled can chew their way out of a hard sided carrier in less than an hour!

Bringing some favorite toys can occupy your bird and help keep him or her calm.

Some collapsible cages come with crocks and a means to attach them. If yours doesn't, heavy ceramic crocks are best as they prevent tipping but are still easy to clean.

Identification:

- Microchip
- Leg band
- Copy of veterinary records
- Pictures of the bird with close ups of any distinguishing marks or features
- Pictures of you with your bird

Most birds over 100 grams can be safely microchipped by your avian vet; this is the only permanent way to identify your bird, as leg bands can be removed.

Health and Safety:

- Large towel
- Spray bottle
- Hot and cool instant packs
- Battery- powered fan
- Medications
- Contact numbers for your vet, and a vet out of disaster area
- Trash bags
- Apple cider vinegar/Bleach for cleaning
- Paper towels



A towel is your best friend in a disaster. You can use it for anything from restraining your bird to covering the cage. Misting birds with water can help cool them down. Instant hot and cool packs can also be wrapped in a towel and placed in the cage to provide relief from temperature extremes. A fan attached to the cage can make a hot day more comfortable. A month's supply of any medications should be kept on hand.

First Aid Kit:

- First aid book for birds
- 4 X 4 gauze pads
- Gauze rolls
- Antiseptic wipes
- Triple antibiotic cream
- Q-tips
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Instant cold/hot pack
- Disposable gloves
- Two rolls of vet wrap
- Popsicle sticks for splints
- Pedialyte - clear
- Blunt nose scissors
- Styptic powder
- Cornflower to stop bleeding on wings or soft tissue
- Hemostat for pulling broken blood feathers
- Cotton swabs
- Feeding syringes in case hand feeding is needed

Don't let the amount of supplies scare you away. You can run out and buy them now, or take your time and get a few items each time you go shopping, spreading the cost out over a few months. It's better to take some time to build a kit slowly than avoid it altogether!

Additional Notes:

STORAGE CONTAINER: Store the emergency supplies in moisture-resistant containers and check that they will fit your vehicle. An evacuation event is not the time to discover your carefully prepared emergency supplies don't fit in the car!

FOOD: Pelleted diets, dried fruits and veggies, pasta, and seeds should survive well in airtight containers. On a regular basis, rotate the emergency food into the daily food supply and store fresh food into the emergency containers. Do not assume that there will be cooking facilities for special foods such as bird bread, cooked pasta or frozen vegetables. Also don't assume there will be refrigeration for fresh vegetables or other perishable items.

GARBAGE BAGS, PAPER TOWELS, BIRD-SAFE DISINFECTANT: For general cage and carrier cleaning

CAGE COVERS: Old sheets or large towels work well. Blankets may be more appropriate for cold weather emergencies. Even if you do not normally cover your bird at night, an emergency cover is a good idea because if they are temporarily housed in a shelter with other birds and animals, a bit of privacy and the illusion of a "safe space" may be helpful.

MEDICINES: keep all pet medicines in one location at home, preferably in a waterproof container which can be grabbed on the run.

BIRD IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTATION: Ideally, have a full profile and behavior sheet on record for each bird along. Make two copies of each. Keep one set with your important papers that go with you if you evacuate. The other set can go with the bird if it has to go to a temporary shelter or to the vet. The photos will help identify your bird when it is time to be reunited.

BABY BIRD SUPPLIES: If you have breeding pairs of birds, plan for baby bird emergency supplies as well. Store and periodically rotate a supply of hand feeding formula. Also store a supply of syringes, spoons, pipettes, or whatever is used to feed the babies. Set aside some type of portable, durable emergency brooder for the babies such as plastic 5-gallon buckets or plastic containers. Also, consider a heat source for the babies. A heating pad is OK if electricity is available. A hot water bottle can also be used if there is a way to heat water. A third alternative is a chemical "heat pack" which can be stored until needed.

Emergency Drills and Evacuation Practice

Just as with family fire drills, it is important to practice quick, safe evacuations of your birds. Since the evacuation drill can be stressful to your birds, consider using stuffed animals for practice. Another possibility is to turn the drills into a game for your bird so it will be easier to handle in case of a real evacuation. You will need to decide the best way to handle emergency drills with your flock.

If a speedy evacuation becomes necessary, trying to assemble pet carriers or portable cages may take up valuable time, so try to store them in an assembled state. As an alternative, a quick, easily-stored container for evacuating birds could be a cloth bag or pillow case. The pet carriers or cages can be assembled later and the birds put into them from the bags. The goal is to have emergency containers which are almost-immediately available if necessary.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE: Follow standard guidelines for making sure your house is a safe place to stay. It may not necessarily be warm or comfortable, but must be safe (no fumes, threat of fire or structural collapse, and so on). If you use auxiliary heating, cooking, or power generation equipment, make sure they are adequately ventilated so that a carbon monoxide buildup is not a hazard.

EVACUATION: Animal assistance organizations may not be activated. Ahead of time, during your preparations, talk to family, friends, and/or your veterinarian about emergency housing arrangements.

Evacuation Preferences: 1) Family 2) Friends/co-workers 3) Pet Friendly Hotel 4) County Animal Response Team Shelter

Large-scale Emergencies

SHELTER-IN-PLACE: Follow standard guidelines for making sure your house is a safe place to stay. It may not necessarily be warm or comfortable, but must be safe (no fumes, threat of fire or structural collapse, and so on). If you use auxiliary heating, cooking, or power generation equipment, make sure they are adequately ventilated so that a carbon monoxide buildup is not a hazard. 72-96 hours may pass before full recovery efforts are underway, so be prepared to feed and house your family and flock for at least that long.

EVACUATION: Listen to the radio for evacuation and shelter instructions. Standard transportation routes may be unavailable, so plan for alternate routes as needed. Transport your birds to the nearest safe haven or animal evacuation shelter. In some cases, local public transit will allow pets onboard, but only if they are not a threat to other passengers, and only as many as you can safely transport.

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Shelters

If you own or have easy access to a recreational vehicle, such as a camper, trailer, or motor home, it may serve as an excellent emergency shelter, depending on its size and how it is equipped for heating and ventilation.

To find out if animal sheltering will be available in the event of a disaster in your area, check with your County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Many have County Animal Response Teams that provide shelter for pets during a disaster. Just in case, plan alternate care options with friends, family, office colleagues, club members, or other social contacts. Have multiple shelter locations; your first choice may be damaged by the disaster!

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