HOW TO COLLECT BIRDSTRIKE EVIDENCE

**Birdstrike Sample**

If both whole feathers and 'snarge' are available, collect both types of evidence.

"The more the merrier"

- Pull (do not cut) breast, back, wing, and tail feathers
- Collect as much material, feathers, fluff, and tissue as possible
- Scrape off all snarge if possible. If too dry, use alcohol spray to loosen and wipe with paper towel.
- NO BLEACH! NO WATER!

**ALLOW ALL SAMPLES TO COMPLETELY DRY BEFORE SHIPMENT**

REGULAR SHIPMENT (US Postal Service)

Smithsonian Institution
Feather Identification Lab
E-600, MRC 116
PO Box 37012
Washington, DC 20013-7012

- Include AFSAS, WESS, or FAA 5200-7 report

OVERNIGHT SHIPMENT (FED EX, UPS, DHL)

Smithsonian Institution
Feather Identification Lab
E-600, MRC 116
10th & Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20560
Guidelines For Collecting Birdstrike Material
Feather Identification Lab, Smithsonian Institution

COLLECTING REMAINS

Feathers:
- Whole Bird - Pluck a variety of feathers (breast, back, wing, tail)
- Partial Bird - Collect a variety of feathers with color or pattern
- Feathers only - Send all material available
- Do not cut feathers from the bird (we need the downy part at the base of the feathers)
- Do not use any sticky substance (no tape or glue)

Tissue/blood (“Snarge”):
- Dry material - Scrape or wipe off into a clean re-closeable bag or wipe area with pre-packaged alcohol wipe or spray with alcohol to loosen material then wipe with clean cloth/gauze. (*please do not use water, bleach, or other cleansers – they destroy DNA)
- Fresh material - Wipe area with alcohol wipe and/or clean cloth/gauze or apply fresh tissue/blood to an FTA® DNA collecting card

➢ Always include any feather material available
➢ Include copy of report (AFSAS, WESS, or FAA 5200-7)
➢ Always secure all remains in re-sealable plastic bag

SHIPPING

Routine / Non-Damaging Cases
US Postal Service

Feather Identification Lab
Smithsonian Institution
NHB, E600, MRC 116
P.O. Box 37012
Washington, DC 20013-7012

Priority / Damaging Cases
Overnight Shipping

Feather Identification Lab
Smithsonian Institution
NHB, E600, MRC 116
10th & Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20560-0116

WEBSITES
Birdstrike Committee: www.birdstrike.org
Civil Aviation: http://wildlife-mitigation.tc.faa.gov
Navy: www.safetycenter.navy.mil/aviation/operations/bash

Feather Lab Contact Information
202-633-0801
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whattonj@si.edu
"MAKE-YOUR-OWN" - BIRDSHIRE COLLECTING KITS

**Birdstrike Collecting Kits** are cheap to make and easy to assemble. Having pre-made kits available improves birdstrike reporting and encourages the sampling of birdstrike remains. Most folks assemble the contents into individual bags or envelopes and keep a supply in field vehicles or office supply cabinets for quick access. Below is a list of recommended items to include in your birdstrike collecting kits; mix and match as budgets permit:

**Re-sealable plastic bags**
A variety of sizes for various amounts of debris; Re-sealable bags help contain liquids and keeps odors to a minimum.

**Sharpie Markers**
Permanent markers are water resistant and used for writing data (date, time, aircraft, etc) directly on the bag of remains.

**Alcohol Wipes**
Pre-packaged alcohol hand-wipes can be used to wipe "snarge" off aircraft. Alcohol is better than water at preserving DNA, preventing mold growth, and is more sanitary for humans. Alternatively, use a spray bottle with 70% alcohol to spray the area before wiping with paper towels.
*Do not use wipes with bleach or other cleansers, it destroys DNA.*

**FTA® Micro Card and Sterile Applicators**
If you send a lot of fresh blood/tissue samples for DNA identification, you may want to look into getting Whatman FTA® DNA cards. The material is sampled with a sterile applicator and placed onto the surface of the card that "fixes" the DNA in the sample. For more information on ordering these items contact the Feather Lab.
*Note: If you only occasionally send blood/tissue samples, a paper towel with alcohol, or alcohol wipe is still a good option for this type of material.*

**Miscellaneous Items for Birdstrike Collecting**
Kitchen shears – good for cutting feet, wings, bills
Tongue depressors, tweezers, cotton swabs/cotton-tipped applicators
Hand cleaners, or other alcohol based gel hand sanitizers.
Extra Safety Items
Latex Gloves
Protective Eyewear
Face Masks: Regular surgical-type hygiene masks. If avian flu is a concern, the Center for Disease Control recommends NIOSH rated N95 face masks. (These may be referred to as respirators.) There is a disposable version of these masks by 3M that looks similar to the regular “cup” style face masks.
Hand sanitizing gels

Reminders
Always encourage proper hygiene & provide personnel easy access to cleaning/hygiene supplies.
Do not cut off the fluffy down at the bottom of feathers.
Do not use water, bleach or other cleansers on samples.
Be sure personnel are briefed on proper carcass disposal protocols.
Stay informed to the status of the HPAI H5N1 avian flu virus.

The following websites have excellent coverage on current avian flu info:

U.S. Geological Survey Wildlife Health Center
http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/facts.htm

The American Ornithologists’ Union Ornithological Council
http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/OC/avianinfluenza.html

Contact Information:
The Feather Identification Lab
Smithsonian Institution
MRC 116, E-600,
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