
1. PURPOSE

This Standard Operating procedure (SOP) describes the daily routine for laboratory finch care.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Animal care staff, facility supervisor, facility manager.

3. MATERIALS

- 3.1. Finch diet
- 3.2. Fresh water bottles
- 3.3. Clean cages with pan
- 3.4. Clean environmental enrichment devices
- 3.5. Disinfectant solution
- 3.6. Cage cards (Darwin, Veterinary Care, Dead Animal Found, etc.)
- 3.7. Room log

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1. Daily:
 - 4.1.1. Log temperature (min/max) and humidity (min/max). Report any abnormality of environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, light, noise) to the supervisor.
 - 4.1.2. Observe all cages for illness, injury, general condition of animals, dead animals and new chicks.
 - 4.1.3. Replenish food as needed.
 - 4.1.4. Check the amount of water remaining within the bottle. If the water bottle is less than ½ full, replace with a fresh water bottle. Do not refill water bottles as this can lead to harmful bacterial growth. If it appears that the water is not being consumed, check the condition of the water stopper.
 - 4.1.5. Perform Veterinary Care treatments. Initial the back of the Veterinary Care card after performing the treatment.
 - 4.1.6. Sweep the floor and empty the garbage container.
 - 4.1.7. Reset temperature/humidity meter, if applicable.
 - 4.1.8. Check vermin traps.
 - 4.1.9. Replenish supplies in the room as needed (especially important prior to the weekend).
 - 4.1.10. Fill in the Room Log.
- 4.2. Pan change:
 - 4.2.1. Pan liners are changed once a week, at a minimum.
 - 4.2.2. Cages and racks are changed once every 3 months, at a minimum.
 - 4.2.3. Cages that are visibly wet, excessively soiled, or that have a strong ammonia odor are changed as necessary.
 - 4.2.4. Change the water bottles once a week, at a minimum.
 - 4.2.5. Feed the birds ad libitum (as much as they want), unless otherwise instructed, with the appropriate finch diet.
 - 4.2.6. Provide avian grit and at minimum one calcium block per cage.

- 4.2.7. Ensure that all cages have an environmental enrichment device (refer to SOP). Change environmental enrichment when they are visibly soiled. Add additional nesting material if necessary.
- 4.2.8. Transfer the cage card(s) to the clean cage before replacing it back on its rack.

- 4.3. Weekly:
 - 4.3.1. Flush the floor drains, if applicable:
 - 4.3.1.1. Run tap water through the drain for approximately 10 seconds.
 - 4.3.1.2. Pour disinfectant, such as bleach.
 - 4.3.2. Check light timers.
 - 4.3.3. Mop the floor.

- 4.4. Monthly:
 - 4.4.1. Wipe down all surfaces such as sinks, doors, doorjambes and doorknobs, windows, cart tops, shelves, etc. with the disinfectant solution.
 - 4.4.2. Clean room exhaust grills.
 - 4.4.3. Clean garbage container and cleaning devices (broom, mop, etc.).

- 4.5. Bi-annually:
 - 4.5.1. Wash all walls with disinfectant solution every six months, at a minimum.
 - 4.5.2. Wash racks every six months.

5. SPECIAL PROCEDURES

- 5.1. Dead animals:
 - 5.1.1. Dead animals are placed in a plastic bag with a Dead Animal Found card attached. The information from the cage card must be transferred to this card. Also document the dead animals on the cage card (with ID and date).
 - 5.1.2. Place the bag in the cold room or in the refrigerator/freezer.
 - 5.1.3. The PI is notified if necessary.

- 5.2. Sick or injured animals:
 - 5.2.1. Place a Veterinary Care card on the cage housing the sick or injured animal.
 - 5.2.2. Complete a Bird Illness/Injury Report and follow the instructions in the Veterinary Care Program SOP

- 5.3. Over-crowded cages:
 - 5.3.1. If the cage population density exceeds guidelines, the cage must be immediately identified with Veterinary Care card and a Bird Illness/Injury Report is filled.
 - 5.3.2. If the problem is not corrected within a reasonable time, the veterinary care staff will separate the animals accordingly and the investigator will be charged for the technical time.

- 5.4. Escaped Animals:
 - 5.4.1. Capture the animal and place in its original cage. If original cage is unknown, place into a cage on its own and identify as "escaped animal". Inform the facility supervisor who will notify the investigator.