**Birds: Egg Euthanasia**

Last Reviewed: March 13, 2024

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline the procedure for disposal or humane euthanasia of eggs found within the Field Research Station at Fort Missoula’s (FRSFM) aviaries.

The incubation period for different species varies from 10 – 21 days. The incubation period for the species being housed should be known to calculate < or > 80% of incubation in order to dispose of or euthanize the egg(s) appropriately. To avoid considerations regarding euthanizing eggs, it is best to dispose of all eggs daily.

**II. Policy**

It is LAR policy to meet or exceed all federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines and to comply with all institutional policies and procedures as they apply to the use of animals in research. Personnel must attend any applicable training in animal care and use, occupational health and safety, equipment operation, and standard operating procedures before performing activities outlined in this SOP or work under the direct supervision of a trained LAR staff member.

**III. Procedures**

The 2020 AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia states that, “Bird embryos that have attained > 80% incubation demonstrate EEG activity that is sustained, with increases in amplitude suggesting the potential for pain perception in conscious embryos” and that “euthanasia of embryos should be performed based on the best available data and with attention to assuring, as best as possible, that conscious suffering does not occur.”

Therefore, if eggs are produced by any captive birds in which males and females (or unknown sexed individuals are housed together) are co-housed in a housing room or aviary at the Field Research Station Fort Missoula that are not intended for incubation, are to be disposed of or euthanized as directed below:

* Eggs with < 80% of the incubation period may be:
  + Placed in the refrigerator for a minimum of four hours and then disposed of in the trash
  + Placed in the CO2 tank (located at the side door) for >20 minutes, and then disposed of in the trash
* Eggs with > than 80% of the incubation period are to be placed in the CO2 chamber (located at the side door) for > 20 minutes and then disposed of in the trash.
* Eggs that are known to have been laid that day, and have not been incubated at all, may be discarded without euthanasia concerns