

## Instructions for Navy Birdstrike Identifications:

Beginning 15 October 2008 the US Navy will begin a one-year contract with the Smithsonian Institution to identify birdstrike remains from all Navy and Marine Corps installations. Because this will be the initial start-up year for this project, we encourage as much participation as possible from Navy. If the demand for Navy birdstrike identifications is great enough, the project may be extended.

The following guidelines will assist scientists in getting the identification of the birdstrike remains back to the installation in an efficient manner. Please also see the instructional handouts on collecting bird remains, shipping, and requirements for foreign shipments.

- **ALL NAVY AND MARINE CORPS BIRDSTRIKES MUST BE ENTERED INTO WESS AND ALL SHIPMENTS OF BIRDSTRIKE REMAINS SENT TO THE SMITHSONIAN MUST HAVE A COPY OF THE WESS REPORT ATTACHED INCLUDING THE UNIQUE WESS SERIAL NUMBER.** We have interagency agreements with US Air Force and civil aviation and conduct approximately 3,500 identifications each year. We must have a unique Navy identification WESS serial number on each bag of remains in order to keep track of the Navy/Marine cases. Please do not send remains for identification without the WESS serial number (the local number will not work). It will delay the identification process, and possibly lead to loss of the sample.
- See handouts and instructions for making your own birdstrike identification kits.
- If you are sending remains from a foreign base include: Certificate of treatment, Certificate of Origin, and USDA APHIS permit.
- Until the Smithsonian is connected to WESS, all Navy and Marine Corps birdstrike identification results will be sent to the Navy Safety Center and the information will be entered into WESS by Navy Safety Center personnel on a weekly basis.

## "MAKE-YOUR-OWN" - BIRDSTRIKE 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.

### 1. Re-sealable plastic bags

A variety of sizes for various amounts of debris. Re-sealable bags help keep odors to a minimum.

### 2. Sharpie Markers

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

### 3. 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. Alcohol content should be 40% or greater. Alternatively, use a spray bottle with 70% alcohol to spray the area before wiping with paper towels. Do not use bleach wipes, it destroys DNA.

### 4. FTA® Micro Card and Sterile Applicators

Whatman® Indicating FTA® (single sample) or similar DNA 'fixing' card is recommended for collecting minute blood and/or tissue evidence. These cards help stop DNA degradation on-the-spot and improve identification probability. Special, sterile applicators (optional) are available for use with these cards but you may also press the card directly onto the snarge.

The cards are available from:

- Air Force contact for FTA® cards is Nicole White  
Government Scientific Source, Inc. (800) 248-8030 x 151
- Civil aviation can purchase these cards from scientific supply companies.

OVER →

## Miscellaneous Items for Birdstrike Collecting

- Kitchen shears (good for cutting feet/wings but DO NOT CUT FEATHERS!)
- Tongue depressors, tweezers, cotton swabs/cotton-tipped applicators
- Hand cleaners, or other alcohol based gel hand sanitizers. DO NOT USE BLEACH ON BIRDSTRIKE SAMPLES.

## 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.

## **Reminders:**

- Always encourage proper hygiene & provide personnel easy access to cleaning/hand washing supplies
- 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:

US. 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/WNV.html>

For more information contact:

The Feather Identification Lab

Smithsonian Institution

MRC 116, E-600,

PO Box 37012

Washington, DC 20013-7012

(202) 633-0801

dovec@si.edu

heackerm@si.edu

dahlanno@si.edu

(rev 13 June 08)



Smithsonian

# HOW TO COLLECT BIRDSTRIKE EVIDENCE



Whole Feathers

"Snarge"  
Blood/Tissue

## Birdstrike Sample

Whole Carcass      Feathers Fragments

If both whole feathers and 'snarge' are available, collect both types of evidence.  
*"The more the merrier"*

Remove all snarge if possible.  
If too dry, use alcohol spray to loosen and wipe with paper towel or use FTA® collecting card  
**NO BLEACH!**  
**NO WATER!**

Pull (do not cut)  
Breast, tail, wing and body feathers

Collect as much material, feathers, fluff, and tissue as possible

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

### OVERNIGHT SHIPMENT

Smithsonian Institution  
Feather Identification Lab  
E-600, MRC 116  
10<sup>th</sup> & Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20560

- Include Navy WESS form with report serial number.
- If FOREIGN:
  1. Cert. of Origin
  2. US APHIS permit
  3. Cert. of Treatment

### REGULAR SHIPMENT

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