



Medical Center For Birds

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The Importance of Identification for Your Bird

The potential loss from escape or theft is a very real and significant concern with many caged bird species. Identification and tracking individuals in groups or in breeding collections can become quite challenging, potentially leading to impaired record keeping accuracy. This risk can be significantly reduced through the use of identification systems in your bird. For this reason, we recommend some means of permanent identification for your bird.

Leg Bands: If your bird has a permanent leg band in place we will want to make sure that it poses no significant risk of injury to your bird, record the Identification numbers on your medical chart, and leave the band in place. There is concern about possible risk of injury with leg bands, and some veterinarians routinely remove them from all pet birds. Unfortunately, this practice results in the actual removal of permanent identification from your bird as well. It is our belief that closed bands pose less risk to the birds than open bands, and that a properly crimped and closed open band is less risky than one that is more open due to incomplete application.

Microchips: We encourage that you consider having a microchip implanted as a means of permanent identification for your bird(s). Microchips may be used in birds that either have no leg bands, their bands were removed previously, or in circumstances where additional and permanent identification methods may be indicated. These microchips can be implanted easily in most birds over 100 grams in body weight. The cost of microchip implantation is nominal. Microchips are implanted with a needle and syringe, and this seems to be a minimally intrusive procedure. Although anesthesia is not required, the use of conscious sedation can benefit many birds, giving them pain management and improved comfort. No other significant problems have been noted related to the microchip itself or the implantation of the chips. It is important to remember to update your information if you move or the ownership of your bird changes. Discuss with our doctors what will be a good plan for you and your bird!

If Your Bird Is Lost: 911 Parrot Alert is a great resource to have on hand if your bird escapes or goes missing. They have several skilled volunteers on their team that are very experienced with the techniques to retrieve your bird if they escape, are stuck up a tree, etc. 911 Parrot Alert can be found online at <http://www.911parrotalert.com/>.