
EXPERIMENT 3 HANDLING OF BIRDS

Structure

3.1 Introduction

Objective

3.2 Experiment

3.2.1 Principle

3.2.2 Requirements

3.2.3 Procedure

3.2.4 Observations

3.2.5 Results

3.3 Precautions

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Handling of birds is the most important pre-requisite in rearing of poultry. Handling of the birds starts ever since chicks are brought to the poultry farm. The chicks are to be placed in the brooding area, vaccinated regularly, debeaked etc. Unlike large animals, which are rather easy to handle, birds can run fast and sometimes even fly. Therefore, special knowledge of handling becomes important.

Objective

After performing this experiment, you will be able to:

- demonstrate handling of birds at the time of vaccination, debeaking, marketing and other essential operations.

3.2 EXPERIMENT

3.2.1 Principle

Birds should be handled carefully to ensure minimum stress. Further, birds and the operator must be comfortable in order to perform necessary operations conveniently and effectively.

3.2.2 Requirements

- Chicks or Poultts and adult birds
- Catching hook (if available)

3.2.3 Procedure

Procedure for handling varies slightly from species to species.

(i) Chicks and Poultts (day-old turkeys)

Chicks and poultts are caught and handled more easily at hatching than any other time.

- 1) Hold the body of the chick by reaching down and holding as if it is an egg.
- 2) Place the chick in your palm (Centre broad portion of the inside of your hand) such that its head should be towards finger tips.

- 3) Place the little finger between its legs.
- 4) With the middle and ring fingers, hold the chick loosely around its body.
- 5) Catch a fold of skin on the neck of the chick with the index and thumb fingers.
- 6) In case of banding, the wings of the chick can be spread with the help of index and thumb fingers (Fig. 3.1).



Fig. 3.1: Chick with wing band

(ii) Adult birds

- 1) Adult birds should be held comfortably with less pressure and its posterior part should be away from the handler's body.
- 2) To catch a bird from a flock in deep litter system, a catching hook can be used or can be caught by grabbing the legs with fingers.
- 3) Lighter birds can be held by one hand keeping, the abdomen of the bird on the palm of one hand and grabbing two legs of bird in between fingers, head of the bird facing towards examiner, keeping another hand free for examination.
- 4) Heavier broiler birds can be held by grabbing the two legs by both the hands of the examiner.
- 5) The movement of the broiler birds at the time of marketing can be restricted by entangling their wings to each other at the base.
- 6) To catch and handle a bird in cage system, the handler should place one hand on bird's back. The other hand should be placed under the bird, holding its legs between the fingers with the breast bone resting on the palm of the hand. Lift the bird out of the cage, the head first. The bird should be replaced in the cage with the head first.
- 7) Duck can be caught by their neck or legs.

3.2.4 Observations

- i) Observe for the behaviour of chicks and adult birds while handling and note down your observations.

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- ii) Record the procedural differences in handling of young and adult birds.

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3.2.5 Results

Give your opinion on handling of birds based on your observations.

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3.3 PRECAUTIONS

- Birds should be handled carefully such that they do not get frightened or feel uncomfortable.
- Heavy breeders and broilers should never be caught by their leg as there are chances of breaking the legs.
- Laying birds should never be held upside down for more than half to one minute.