

Some Tips on Handling and Grooming Pet Birds

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Capture and Restraint of Pet Birds

Introduction

A very important consideration is that the means of capture, restraint and examination of a pet bird are quite often how an avian veterinarian is judged by the client. Even if one is an excellent diagnostician, the inability to handle a bird properly or causing physical trauma to the bird during the examination could lead to client dissatisfaction.

The avian practitioner must recognize when NOT to handle a sick bird. A bird that is in severe respiratory distress should not be handled. Before attempting to handle a critically ill bird it is advisable to warn the owner that the bird might not withstand the capture and restraint procedure so that minimal handling is essential. If the bird is dyspneic, a quick glance in the mouth and a rapid abdominal palpation may be attempted as an aid in diagnosis while transferring the bird to the hospital cage or incubator. Fortunately, only a small percentage of birds are so critically ill that they cannot undergo a complete physical. However, if improperly handled, even a healthy bird could be so stressed that it could die during restraint.

Free movement of the sternum is essential for respiration in birds. They possess no diaphragm and their lungs do not expand and contract. They breathe through expansion and contraction of their air sacs facilitated by their intercostal muscles. Thus, any undue pressure on their sternum would restrict breathing. We have all heard of instances where a bird has died in someone's hand. More than likely they had closed their hand around the chest inhibiting respiration. When handling a bird, fingers should never be closed around the chest, rather cupped in the hand to allow for sternal movement.

During handling carefully monitor the bird for any signs of discomfort, stress or breathing difficulty. Due to struggling, the bird could contort and twist in such a way to constrict the air passages. Also during restraint, efforts to escape can lead to hyperthermia, especially if in a towel, so be alert if the bird begins to pant heavily during the exam. It might be advisable if the bird is in extreme discomfort to release the bird and allow it to return to normal breathing before continuing, particularly as the bird may be compromised by a disease condition anyway.

The amount of restraint required varies with each individual bird. Hand-raised baby birds need minimal restraint while wild-caught untamed birds may require an assistant (or two!). A word of caution when handling hand-raised birds; quite often these birds have been fed shortly before the exam so their crop may be partially full. Take care not to put pressure on the crop as the food material could back up the esophagus and lead to aspiration. The esophagus passes on the right side of the neck so a small amount of pressure in this area with the left thumb (if the head is held with the left hand) while restraining the bird will prevent backflow. This would also apply to any bird that has fluid in the crop. Get in the habit of evaluating the crop for the presence of fluid so episodes of aspiration can be prevented.

Overzealous restraint of a bird could lead to fracture or dislocation of a limb. White-faced birds such as macaws or African Greys, experiencing excessive pressure on the sides of their face to facilitate immobilization of the head could develop bruises on their skin. Although these are harmless and will quickly resolve, they are a source of irritation to the client as they feel it was due to mishandling.

Preparation for capture

The client should not be allowed to handle or restrain the bird during the exam as most are not trained in this capacity. The decision to allow their assistance in restraint should be made carefully, as if injury occurs the veterinarian is liable. Caution the bird owner to avoid petting or kissing the bird during restraint as the bird in its frightened state may not recognize a nearby appendage as friendly and may inflict a painful bite.

Small birds can be captured and restrained bare-handed, however, protection is required for larger birds. Cloth or paper towels are preferable as they expedite both capture and restraint. Hands are hidden behind the towel so the bird cannot get a direct line on fingers and also the towel can be draped over the bird during capture so that the wings are protected. Another advantage to the towel is that the bird does not see the hands during capture so that it will not become hand shy; it may become towel shy

however. Proper restraint in a towel will enable one person to complete an exam in all but the large parrots, whereby an assistant is required. A source of clean towels must be available. If an adequate supply is not available the receptionist should request that the client bring an appropriately sized towel for restraint.

Avian practitioners do not recommend the use of heavy gloves for restraint purposes. Although they may be a successful means for capture and restraint they have several disadvantages. Grabbing a bird with heavy gloves appears rough, leaving the client with a bad impression. The bird may associate the gloved hand with the bare hand, leading to the fear of hands entirely. Another consideration is that gloves are difficult to clean thoroughly and if several birds are seen daily it could pose a problem. Still another disadvantage is that two people are required to examine the bird and the gloves will not protect the wings as well as the towel.

Because of the contagious nature and prevalence of psittacine viruses such as Beak and Feather Disease virus and polyoma virus, smocks or protective outerwear that can be changed after restraining high-risk groups should be readily available.

In preparation, make sure all the doors to the exam room are closed and secure to prevent escape. With smaller birds, as the cage door is opened make certain the area surrounding the capturing hand and arm is blocked in some manner so that the bird cannot pass around it and out of the cage. Occasionally larger birds are brought in carriers and cages in which the opening is too small to easily pass a hand through while clutching the bird. The removal could be further hindered if a towel is wrapped around the bird. Evaluate the size; perhaps the removal of top or bottom of the cage may facilitate capture. Quite often the cage is cluttered with perches, toys and cage accessories. Removing these objects is not always necessary but may be required if capture is hindered. Darkening the room before capture can be helpful with very small birds and facilitates the procedure with less disturbance to the birds.

Nearly all birds will attempt to bite when captured. If bitten, do not squeeze the bird harder or suddenly drop the bird uttering a salty oath. Techniques to stop a bird from biting include blowing into the face of the bird, using a mouth speculum or similar device to open the beak, or just releasing the bird. Another technique is to twirl quickly in a circle (while holding the bird), which disorients the bird, causing it to release its hold. Until the capture and restraint techniques are mastered many bites will unfortunately be endured, which will contribute to the rapid development of the practitioner's skill of capture and restraint.

Capture and restraint of small birds

Budgies, finches and canaries are usually captured bare-handed. If inexperienced, a paper towel can be used to restrain these birds until comfortable to restrain them bare-handed. Basically, reach into the cage and when easily able to, grab the bird behind the head and neck. The hand should be cupped around the body while attempting to hold the head with the thumb and index finger on the sides of the temporomandibular joints. Remember not to close the hand around the chest, but do provide enough firm restraint so that the wings are unable to flutter freely. If a towel is used it can be dropped over the bird, locate the position of the head, grasp it firmly and gently enclose the body into the towel, encompassing the wings and feet, but with no undue pressure on the chest. When removing the bird from the cage remove it head first through the door for if the wings did work free there would be less likelihood for injury moving the bird in this direction.

There are five basic means of holding a birds head. 1) Extend the head between the index and middle finger, 2) Grasp the head with the thumb and index finger on either side of the head at the temporomandibular joint, 3) Using three fingers, place the thumb and middle finger just below the eyes and the index finger over the head, called the 'helmet grip,' 4) Crook the index finger behind the back of the head and gently place the thumb behind the lower mandible, 5) Gently circling the neck with the thumb and index finger as a tubular restraint collar would. With gentle pressure the head can be adequately restrained by any of these techniques. Techniques 4) and 5) are preferred methods as they are not very stressful for the bird and provides complete exposure of the head facilitating examination. Each practitioner should practice each technique and implement the one with which they are able to achieve the best restraint. In each of these techniques, remember that the body should be held loosely and rest in the palm of the hand. If having difficulty with the restraint of the wings and feet, do not hesitate to use a towel.

Capture and restraint of large birds

Lovebirds, cockatiels, conures and mynah birds may be restrained bare-handed but it is preferable to handle them with a paper towel or a small washcloth due to the fact that they can impart a painful bite. These birds can still be examined by a single person. Birds larger than these, Amazons, cockatoos, macaws, for example, require the help of an assistant, particularly when it is time to examine the wings and legs. It is possible to examine even large birds without assistance if restrained in a towel, but the examination is not as effective. If a technician is not available to help, then employ the aid of the bird owner to hold the feet while the examination is completed, however caution them.

The capture technique is fairly simple but, of course, requires practice. An appropriately sized towel for the variety of bird is essential. Tame birds can be easily caught, some will allow the towel to be wrapped around them; others may allow the towel to be placed around them while they are standing on the exam table or on the arm of the owner. Avoid frightening the bird by suddenly capturing it from above with a towel. Long-lasting phobias can be the result. If a bird is captured off of the owner be careful as the bird may clamp down with the beak or nails if frightened. Once the towel has been gently wrapped around the bird, locate the head and grasp it from behind through the towel. While holding the head with one hand, use the other to lightly wrap the towel around the body, to restrain the wings and feet. Lift the body with both hands and rest the bird in the towel on the inside of the forearm or on the exam table, which will free the other hand for manipulation and palpation during the exam. Restraint of the head can be with one of the five techniques described earlier. With large birds techniques 4) and 5) are still preferred especially since holding birds on the side of the face may cause bruising. Assistance will be required as the examination moves down from the head as the towel will need to be unwrapped and the assistant can restrain the feet while the practitioner retains control of the head.

Untamed birds are more difficult to capture. If capture of such a bird from inside the cage is to be attempted be patient; do not create a rodeo atmosphere. What must be done is to wait for the right opportunity, which is when the bird is facing away or climbing on the cage bars which will enable the head to be grabbed from behind. If successful, then to wrap the towel around the body. If the bird is difficult to capture, then remove the perches from the cage. A bird that will not stop facing the capturer or rolls over on its back is a challenge and each practitioner will need to develop an individual style. Try to distract the bird so that it will turn its head, but if all else fails then use two hands holding the towel and try to scoop the bird up quickly trying to gain control of the head. One's capture technique will improve over time so do not give up. Avian practitioners have suffered through their share of bites before they developed capture expertise.

GROOMING

Introduction

Grooming in an avian practice can be a double-edged sword. It is a useful adjunct to the medical practice, providing a very convenient service for the clients as well as offering an additional means of providing income. Clients feel reassured when grooming is done in a quality avian practice as they expect the most humane and efficient handling of their pet, coupled with good sanitation practices and the knowledge of the latest and most effective grooming techniques. Unfortunately, this is where problems can arise with grooming in an avian practice. If clients feel that their pet was mishandled during the grooming procedure or that the grooming was improperly performed (for example, a bird that does not eat after a beak trim or a bird that can still fly after a wing clip) they may become dissatisfied with the practice as a whole and not return as clients. It is therefore essential that basic grooming procedures are properly carried out with effective handling to minimize stress or injury to the bird. The ability to perform groomings in an avian practice is important as it is usually what the clients desire as part of the yearly visit to the veterinarian. Of course, some avian patients with chronic conditions that require regular grooming visits are seen on a more frequent basis. Quite often avian veterinarians are initially judged by their grooming and handling skills.

Restraint

One of the most important considerations during any grooming procedure is proper restraint of the bird. Improper handling can lead to injury, undue stress or even death. Review the discussion in the previous sections pertaining to proper capture and restraint of pet birds.

Reiteration of a few key points are in order. Even a healthy bird could become severely stressed and die if improperly handled. It is of critical importance that the assistant handling the bird during grooming monitor for any signs of discomfort, stress, dyspnea or any signs that could indicate a problem. Any irregularities should immediately be brought to the attention of the person performing the grooming so it can be stopped and the situation assessed. If performing a grooming alone, one must be effective with the grooming technique as well as vigilant of the condition of the bird. Quite often, if the bird is extremely stressed or having breathing difficulties, the procedure should be stopped and the bird allowed to rest until the bird returns to normal.

It is also important to recognize that a bird in a towel during a grooming procedure may become very excited, struggle, and can easily become overheated. During their efforts to free themselves, they can twist and contort, potentially causing restrictions to breathing or possibly causing a fracture or dislocation.

When handling white-faced birds (such as African greys and macaws) be cautious and avoid applying pressure during restraint to their facial skin, as it can develop reddened, bruised areas quite easily. These are harmless and will usually resolve quickly,

but when the bird is brought back to the clients, they will feel that the bird was handled roughly, suffering an injury to their face.

Another word of caution when handling baby birds. Always ascertain the fullness of the crop through palpation. Baby birds with formula in their crops should be handled carefully to prevent regurgitation and aspiration. Keep an eye out for any indication of food material retropulsing into the oropharynx and try to keep struggling to a minimum, as there is greater risk for accidental pressure on the crop pushing material up the esophagus and into the mouth. If there is a problem or the risk is too great, recommend postponing the procedure and have the client return when the bird has an empty crop.

Overzealous restraint of bird toes during a pedicure can also lead to problems. If the groomer is careless in restraining a toe during clipping, a toe can fracture or, even more easily, become dislocated. Avoid holding the toe by the distal phalanx, where an ill-timed twist could cause injury. If a dislocation occurs, it can easily be reduced by careful manipulation and will remain in place with no further intervention in the vast majority of cases. After a pedicure, it is a good idea to check for any toes that may have been displaced. It is much better to evaluate for potential injury before the bird is brought back to the client and they notice the problem.

When using the Dremel™ or an equivalent grinder, the operator must be cautious. Have good control of the device and use care not to allow it to catch in the towel, an errant human or avian digit, beak or tongue. Some birds become extremely nervous when they hear the sound of the Dremel™, so watch them carefully during the trimming procedure. Beak trimming can be especially stressful when using a grinding device due to the vibration and heat produced so it is of utmost importance to monitor their condition when grinding and shaping beaks.

Nail Trimming

Nail trimming is probably the most frequently performed grooming procedure. Nails overgrow readily and become quite sharp in pet birds, as they spend most of their time on perches with little opportunity for wear. Overgrown nails are problematic due to the risk of breakage or snagging, but also long, sharp nails can be painful to the owner when the bird is perching on the arm or shoulder, which is usually what prompts the request for grooming in the first place. Nail wear can be facilitated by having the bird walk on a variety of surfaces or possibly by placing a coarse surfaced perch, such as a cement perch, in the cage. Sandpaper perch covers can be irritating to the feet and do not wear the nails down adequately.

A variety of instruments can be used for trimming toenails and this will depend on the size of the bird. Small bird toenails can be trimmed with human fingernail clippers, small pet nail clippers and sharp wire clippers. Small parrots and larger birds require larger clippers, such as quality dog nail clippers, either guillotine or side cut, or larger wire clippers. A variable speed Dremel™ tool with a cone-shaped grinding attachment is ideal for trimming toenails. It enables one to trim a nail further back than clipping, as it does cauterize the nail somewhat. Another advantage is that the nail can be shaped to remove sharp edges. This can also be accomplished by using a fingernail file following clipping. The type of instrument selected is a matter of preference and the degree of success in problem-free grooming. It is important that devices used to clip nails have sharp edges to prevent nail trauma and a painful clip, so check them periodically.

When performing the nail trim, it can be difficult to determine how far back to trim. With birds that have white nails the task is somewhat easier, as the blood vessels can be visualized as a pink or red coloration in the nail. The clip is made just distal to the apparent blood vessel. In small birds, this can be readily accomplished by clipping the nails. Larger birds can have the nails ground down to have a smoother edge or clipped and then smoothed. The procedure is more challenging when the nails are black. It then becomes a matter of experience to know how far back to trim.

Nails that are very overgrown create problems because the quick will extend further out into the nail than normal. Trimming to a more typical length is difficult due to the likelihood of bleeding. When clipping a grossly overgrown nail, this is more of a certainty. If the nail is ground with a variable speed Dremel™ some cautery will occur while trimming, enabling the nail to be trimmed shorter. Some means of hemostasis should always be within reach during any grooming procedures.

Problems that can occur during nail trimming include cutting nails too short so that they bleed. When this occurs it can be quite painful to the bird. Following such a trimming the bird may hold its foot up and this can upset the client if it persists. Another problem with trimming nails too short (not necessarily involving bleeding) is that the bird may have difficulty holding onto the perch. Some reasonable length should remain so that the bird can have a grip on the perch. Clients can become quite upset if their bird continues to slide off the perch if the nail trim was too short.

It is difficult to effectively disinfect Dremel™ heads so if bleeding occurs, diseases, such as Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease, may be transmitted to the patient. Heads should be discarded after grooming birds known to have PBFDF or other infectious diseases.

Beak Trimming

Do not assume that an overgrown beak is strictly due to the lack of beak activity or chewing. When a client brings their bird in for grooming and has never had an examination (or if it has been longer than a year) the technician (or whomever is performing the trim) should recommend a physical examination. In this way an evaluation can be made to determine a possible cause for any beak abnormalities.

The same instruments used for trimming toenails can be used on the beak. The variable speed Dremel™ tool is outstanding for trimming and shaping the beak as the speed can be controlled to minimize vibration, depending upon the size of the bird. The noise created by the Dremel™ can frighten some birds and some head vibration can be noted during the grinding, especially with small birds. If clippers are to be used, it is preferable to leave the beak a little longer than desired with the initial clip and then finish shaping with a Dremel or appropriate file as too short of a clip can be painful.

Before trimming a beak, it is essential to have a mental image of the normal appearance of the beak for the type of bird that is being groomed. With this image firmly in mind, the beak can be trimmed to the proper length and shape. As with nail trimming, smaller birds can have their beaks clipped with appropriate instruments for their size while larger birds require grinding or a combination of clipping and shaping. If the lower beak is overgrown, the upper beak can be gently positioned inside the lower beak. This provides the groomer direct access to the overgrown beak tissue, allowing for quick grooming.

Trimming a beak too short can lead to bleeding and if painful to the bird, it can prevent eating for a variable number of days depending upon the severity of the injury. If using a high-speed grinder, one must always be cautious when shaping the sides of the beak as the hard beak itself is not very thick and a careless groomer could wear through to the underlying vascular and sensitive tissues. Caution must always be exercised when using a grinder on small birds due to the vibration generated during beak trimming and shaping. Hepatic lipidosis birds should be trimmed with great care, using a grinder sparingly, if at all. During involved beak trimming procedures such as a severe malocclusion, it may be advisable to allow the bird to rest if the procedure is taking a prolonged period of time.

To eliminate stress, it may be advisable to anesthetize a bird for an involved grooming procedure or if the bird is very excitable. The safety of isoflurane anesthesia has reduced the risk involved and is used quite frequently by avian practitioners.

Wing Clipping

Wing clipping is not a necessity but in many instances can be quite important for the well-being of the bird. Generally speaking, wing clipping is recommended due to the large number of dangerous situations a bird can face in the household. Wing clipping can prevent serious accidents such as flying into windows, mirrors, walls or ceiling fans. It will also keep birds from landing on hot cooking surfaces or falling into open containers of water. If the client is able to monitor the bird carefully and prevents such dangerous situations then wing clipping may not be necessary. Wing clipping prevents accidental escapes through an open door or window. Clients that have free-flying birds and a lot of traffic in and out of their house should strongly consider wing clipping. In a house with other pets, wing clipping might remove the main advantage a bird has over a rambunctious dog or cat. Most pets live in peaceful coexistence, however, if there is a risk that a dog or cat might go after the bird then perhaps keeping the wings intact would be preferable.

Wing clipping is also an effective tool in the training of birds. A fully-flighted bird tends to be more independent and more difficult to tame. It is an excellent idea to have the wings of a new bird clipped until the bird is adequately trained. If the wing feathers grow back in and the bird continues to be tame and the client can manage the bird with flight, then the wings can be left alone. Flight is an important part of quality-of-life and exercise for many pet birds. When escape or injury is a threat, seasonal wing-clipping or partial wing clipping (reduced flight) may be an option.

If the bird becomes more independent or aggressive, then the wings need to be re-clipped. Quite often during periods of hormonal behavior birds become aggressive and difficult to handle. Wing clipping, at these times, does seem to be helpful in calming some of the activity. Some high-strung birds, such as African greys or cockatoos, become upset after wing clipping and will chew or shred the cut portions of their wing feathers, especially if longer portions remain of the cut flight feather.

If a bird has full flight take precautions to avoid injury or accidental escape in the clinic. Always keep two closed doors between a flighted bird and the outside world.

There are several variations used for wing clippings, but a few key principles are involved. Wings should be clipped evenly on both sides. There were some proponents of clipping only one wing, which would unbalance the bird and make flight difficult. It does accomplish that end, however, when birds clipped in such a fashion began to fly they had so little control that they could suffer significant injury. With both wings clipped, a properly clipped bird will be capable of a smooth, descending flight and be unable to attain elevation.

Never guarantee that after a bird has had a wing clip that it will be unable to fly when it is taken outside. As birds are so well adapted for flight, if conditions outside were right, even a clipped bird might be capable of enough flight to escape. There are countless instances of bird owners that have lost birds outside that had been clipped (or so they thought). Another type of circumstance is when a bird, that had been clipped, had or is undergoing a molt unbeknownst to the owner and has developed enough new flight feathers that it is now capable of flight. Some practices display a plaque warning owners that a properly performed wing clip does not guarantee against flight in all situations. If a practice has the capability with a computer system, a statement pertaining to such can be added to the invoice whenever a bird is given a wing clip. Liability-wise some type of disclaimer is a good idea.

Another consideration is the type of bird that is having the wings clipped. Some heavier-bodied birds do not need as severe a wing clip as a lighter, more aerodynamic type of bird. For example, Amazon parrots and African grey parrots require less clipping of flight feathers, than a bird such as a cockatiel, to restrict flight. In fact, cockatiels sometimes seem to be capable of flight even after all the flight feathers are clipped! It is recommended to test flight a bird after a wing clip is done if one is uncertain as to the effectiveness of the clip. An ideal type room for test flights would be carpeted with few obstacles and capable of being closed up to prevent escape, such as an office.

If wings are clipped severely and the bird drops abruptly rather than having a descending flight, significant injury can occur. Three common sites of injury that can occur from too severe of a wing clip, are the beak, sternum, and tail base. When the bird is unable to ease descent and they land on a hard, not carpeted surface, they can split the skin over their sternum. The skin at this site is very thin and can easily be traumatized. The tail base laceration injury seems to occur most often in cockatiels, especially young cockatiels that have recently had their wings clipped and were not proficient fliers at the time of the clipping. These birds tend to hit the ground hard with their rumps and tear the skin ventrally at the margin of the uropygium. Both these injuries usually require surgical intervention and could be prevented with proper clippings.

There are two basic types of wing clips, the standard and the cosmetic with variations of each. The standard wing clip involves clipping the first five to ten flight feathers (the primaries) on both wings. The feathers are clipped just below the covert feathers, seen on the dorsal aspect of the wing. However, the AAV recommends a variation where the feather is clipped near the base, leaving only a short portion of the quill. It is felt that it does not promote feather chewing of the wing fragment by high-strung birds and is still aesthetic. (AAV) Whichever method is used, take care using scissors to make a nice even cut, a ragged cut makes the client think the job was butchered even though it might have been effectively done. Aesthetics are important in groomings. The number of primary flight feathers trimmed depend upon the type of bird and flying ability. Clients can become quite upset if, after a wing clip, their bird is dropping like a stone and suffering injuries. The standard clip is the preferred clip and is more effective at restricting flight.

The cosmetic clip is preferred by some clients, as when done properly, it is difficult to tell that the bird has had a wing clip when the wings are folded in normal resting position. With the standard clip, as the primary flight feathers are clipped, it is noticeable that the bird has been clipped. The cosmetic clip is accomplished by leaving three or four of the outer primary flight feathers and clipping the remaining primaries and secondary flight feathers (if more flight restriction is desired). As with the standard clip use the covert feathers on the dorsal side of the wing as a guide or clip near the base as the AAV recommends. This type of clip is especially preferred by macaw owners, for example, as the beauty of their wings are maintained. Unfortunately, this type of clip is not very effective in restricting flight. A bird that has this type of clip should not be taken outside as it would be at a great risk for escape.

When clipping the flight feathers, always be on the alert for newly developing feathers that have blood in the shaft (blood feathers). The shaft of the feather will appear to be red or blue, where a completely developed feather will have a shaft that is relatively clear. If a blood feather is accidentally cut it will bleed. When clipping wings avoid cutting the blood feathers, however, do not cut the other fully developed feathers leaving the blood feather remaining without support as there is the strong possibility that with normal activity it will break and bleed. If a blood feather is present, leave a fully developed feather on one side of it to provide support. Instruct the client that when the blood feather has fully developed to return and the clip will be completed (usually for no charge). If numerous blood feathers are developing, it would be a good idea to postpone the

wing clip for a few weeks until they have fully developed. All short wing clips make the bird more prone to breaking blood feathers, as the nearby emerging shafts are not protected by the surrounding feathers. Birds that are prone to blood feather breakage may be best left with a longer clip.

If a blood feather would happen to break then the shaft of the feather should be grasped firmly with fingers or tweezers and pulled out. Merely applying some form of hemostasis at the broken end of the feather and not removing the entire feather may result in the clot loosening with resultant resumption of bleeding. Pressure and clotting powder should then be applied to the feather follicle. Using a cotton tipped applicator dipped in the clotting powder will aid in applying it in the follicle and also expedites placing direct pressure to the follicle, assisting in hemorrhage control. Most bleeding episodes can be controlled with powder to aid in clotting combined with steady pressure. Frequent dabbing or rubbing may interfere with clot formation. After the bleeding has been controlled the bird should be placed in a covered cage or darkened room and periodically checked for bleeding. Agents that can be used to stop bleeding include, styptic powder, styptic pencil, silver nitrate sticks, commercial products such as quickstop, monsel's powder (ferric subsulfate), or cornstarch, baking soda and flour.

Grooming can be a blessing or a curse in avian practice. If performed with diligence and care it is an excellent adjunct to the practice as well as providing full service to the clients. Unfortunately, a bad grooming experience can cause a client to become angry and potentially leave a practice even though the medical care is superlative.

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