



NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
**PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**

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# Procedure - Destruction of birds using neck dislocation

<b>Authorised by</b>	Leader, APFHEPR	<b>Authorisation date</b>	18 Aug 08
<b>Authorisation period</b>		<b>Effective date</b>	18 Aug 08
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## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Amendments	
		Section	Details
1	13 June 01		
2	18 Aug 08		Re-formatted

## 1. Application / Scope

- The humane destruction of birds, in as short as time as practical is a key objective for the LDCC. A number of methods are available for mass destruction.
- The dislocation of the neck can be used to kill reasonable numbers of birds. The method is suitable for juvenile to adult birds, and is best used for small numbers of birds. Reasonably skilled operators are recommended.
- The rate of kill will be limited by the ability to catch the birds and the age of the birds (effort increases with the age of the birds).

## 2. Abbreviations / Definitions

## 3. Resources / Equipment

On a per team or work station basis the following resources should be deployed:

- PPE for personnel – respirators (2 strap), goggles, gloves, shoes, suitable shirt/shorts/overalls, head protection if working in area with low head clearance.
- Catching frames/hooks as needed by shed design.
- Up to 20 personnel depending on the size of shed, number and size of birds etc. (personnel fitness will need to sustain considerable bending of the legs/back, and arm/shoulder actions.
- Transport for dead birds eg truck/skip – ideally these should be leak proof &/or have any drain holes plugged eg wood plug.
- Loader or similar to collect dead birds.
- Builders plastic (min 150 micron) to line truck/skip.

## 4. Warnings

This operation has a number of potential OH&S risks. For a significant operation it is desirable to appoint a Safety Officer for the duration of the task. A first aider should also be available.

- Physical fitness – where large numbers of birds are involved, the personnel will need to be fit. Catching, holding & extending of the bird's neck is physically demanding.
- Manual handling – adjust of shed fittings, movement of catching pens etc. will require manual handling. Such tasks must be undertaken in accordance with good work practice.

Where large numbers of birds are to be collected after killing, mechanical assistance eg bobcat, should be used to move the birds out of a shed.

- Slips, trips and falls – the nature of the catching, etc presents these possibilities. Personnel should be encouraged to work within their limits, and suitable breaks taken. Personnel should be matched to the tasks at hand.
- Cuts & scratches – the operating environment will present many edges, sharps, etc that have the potential to inflict injury. This includes the birds themselves. Areas of exposed skin should be minimised, including the wearing of gloves (especially for birds in cages). Potential hazards should be either removed, &/or protected (covered) &/or marked with a hazard warning eg hazard tape. Where the risk of injury cannot be minimised, an alternative approach should be sought eg removal of a wall.

- Electrical installations – farms typical have a wide standard of electrical installations. A check must be made to ensure the work area is safe for personnel. It may be necessary to isolate the supply to the work area during the task.
- Eye injuries – the flapping of wings, rapid movement of hands, etc all present the possibility of foreign matter in eyes. Eye protection should be worn by all personnel.
- Mechanical assistance – where machinery such as a front end loader or similar are involved, it is essential all personnel are aware of the requirements when working around such machinery. Only personnel with accredited/approved personnel are to operate the equipment.

The machinery must meet the minimum requirements eg flashing light, audible reversing alarm.

- Operating environment – inside commercial sheds can be a fairly hostile working environment eg high temperature +/- high humidity, ammonia, dust. Efforts should be made before the commencement of the task to ensure the shed is well ventilated, and where possible cooling is operating NOTE: the use of foggers to coll a shed is likely to increase the humidity of the shed & is not recommended.
- Emotional well being – personnel will be affected differently by the experience. It is possible some personnel will be unable to be involved/complete this task. Careful selection of personnel is essential. It is essential all personnel are provided with the opportunity to access appropriate support.

## 5. Procedure

- Pre any activity, ensure animals not to be destroyed are securely isolated away from those to be destroyed.
- In a team the following roles may be needed:
  - Catching & killing (the bulk of the team)
  - Dead bird collection – number will depend on the level of mechanical support
  - There may be a need to have a group to keep the figures on no's of animals killed.
  - It may be desirable to have suitably qualified person to check the birds are being handled and killed humanely (at least initially).
- A Team Leader should coordinate all activities, and take advice from the Safety Officer.
- In advance of the actual destruction;
  - an on-site plan should be developed & include consideration of best access to the birds for catchers, vehicles to collect dead birds, trucks/skips to remove dead birds.
  - adjustments made to shed systems to minimise bird movement during catching; and provide the best operating environment for the personnel
  - shut off feed and water systems, and if possible adjust so they allow ready movement around the shed
  - ensure no birds can escape from the shed if they get free.
- Setup
  - Locate trucks, loaders etc to maximise efficiency, and also safety of personnel.
  - Trucks/skips to receive dead birds should be lined with plastic (min 150mm)
- Destruction
  - Using catching frames if applicable, birds are caught, ensuring they are correctly handled to minimise trauma/injury to the birds
  - Catchers may either:
    - Kill each bird as it is caught, and drop for collection by loading crew; &/or

- Catch several birds to one hand, and then each bird caught, again leaving for the loading crew.
- To kill a bird:
  - Feet of bird are held in one hand (usually left hand for a right hander)
  - The second hand grasp the bird around the neck adjacent to the base of the head/skull;
  - The grasp around the head should be with the fingers under the front of the head ie below the beak, with the small finger at the end of the beak; and the thumb across the back of the head.
  - With a quick action, the neck is extended to its full length and at the same time, the head rolled backwards over the thumb using the fingers.

Note: Caution must be taken to ensure excessive force is not used during the extension & rolling action to prevent the head being separated from the body.

## 6. References

- <D:\LDCC Ops pics\Destruction>Loading skip.jpg>
- NSW Manual 4.0
- AUSVETPLAN Destruction 4.7

## 7. Appendices