



CHAPTER 8C

SPECIES-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

BIRD GUIDELINES

ADVISORY: Birds are tested for avian diseases to prevent the spread of disease to other birds as well as to humans. Ensure that flock tests are current. Birds used in exhibition must have evidence of a current flock health test, as required by the USDA.

8-16..... American Humane Society's *Guidelines for the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media* apply to anyone bringing an animal to the set, including members of the cast or crew.

a. For safety and efficiency, American Humane Society recommends that producers hire animal handlers experienced in motion picture production to supply all birds for production. However, if production chooses to have private owners — including cast and crew — provide birds, all requirements of the *Guidelines* must be implemented.

b. When applicable, producers shall distribute in advance the instruction sheet on "Special Requirements for Extras/Others Who Supply Animals."

8-16.1..... Birds that are underweight, overweight or otherwise not in appropriate physical or behavioral condition to perform the required work shall not be used. An animal shall not be used if, in American Humane Society's judgment, the animal is not in appropriate condition.

8-17* Release of Birds

a. No domesticated bird may be permanently released into the wild. A hunting permit will not be accepted as a proper form of approval for any type of release.

b. Birds must be recaptured when released for a scene, or the area should be enclosed to prevent escape. (Also see Guideline 1-36 and Wildlife Guidelines at the end of this chapter.)

c. No bird may be flown after dark unless it is trained to stay in a lighted area or the area is enclosed.

- 8-17.1..... **Homing Pigeons:** Only trained homing pigeons may be used. American Humane Society may request documentation certifying that the birds are actually trained homing pigeons. Pigeons purchased from a pet store are not homing pigeons and will not fly “home”.
- a. All pigeons must be appropriately banded. The band must be a numbered band that recognizes the owner of the bird and is registered with a recognized pigeon racing association OR contains the owner’s name, address, and telephone number.
 - b. An inventory of the pigeons must be provided to American Humane Society in advance of the release. The inventory must identify each bird to be released and include the band numbers located on each pigeon’s band OR contain the owner’s name, address, and telephone number. American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representatives™ will use the inventory to ensure an accurate accounting of the pigeons to be released.
 - c. Homing Pigeons from different locations or providers cannot be released at the same time. Time must be provided for the different groups, once released, to fly out of sight before releasing the next group of birds from different providers.
 - d. Homing pigeons must be released during daylight hours, and the release must be calculated (distance and speed) to allow for the birds to arrive home preferably with at least three hours of daylight remaining or before dusk. Advance approval from American Humane Society is required when distances will take more than one day for birds to arrive at their loft (home).
 - e. Care must also be taken that there are no predators, such as hawks, in the release area.
 - f. Birds, including homing pigeons, shall never be released, or flown in inclement weather, including, but not limited to, heavy cloud cover, rain, high wind, sleet, and snow. It is important to check the weather forecast at the release location, along the flight path home and at the birds’ loft to ensure appropriate weather conditions for a successful release and return of birds.
- 8-18* Pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, taking, killing or possessing migratory birds is unlawful unless permitted by regulations. It is unlawful to take, possess or transport any migratory insectivorous bird or migratory nongame bird.
- 8-19..... Consideration must be given to the delicate respiratory systems of birds. Birds must not work in poor air-quality conditions, such as high humidity or in the presence of any type of aerosol, smoke and/or chemicals. People working in close proximity to birds shall not smoke or wear perfume. (Also see Chapter 6, Special Effects.)
- 8-20..... The practice of de-beaking is prohibited and must be simulated.
- 8-21..... Care must be taken to ensure that animals do not escape the set or location. Production and the animal handler must also have a safety plan in place that will prevent the escape of an animal from the set or location and provide for an animal’s safe recapture should an accident or escape occur. (Also see *Guideline* 1-36.)
- 8-22..... Birds are particularly susceptible to high heat, humidity, cold wind and drafts and should be protected while on set from inclement weather, including, but not limited to, rain, sleet and snow.
- 8-23..... Birds, including chickens, may only be stacked in containers that do not permit them to defecate on one another. Wooden cages or crates must never be used to

- house birds, as they promote disease transmission.
- 8-24..... American Humane Society promotes the use of sanitary measures (disinfecting, hand washing, etc.) to prevent the spread of disease.
- 8-25..... Birds should be housed in containers that permit each animal to make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. The housing shall provide shelter from heat, rain, snow and strong winds.
- 8-25.1 Tethering should only be accomplished by trained, experienced animal handlers.
- 8-25.2 It is not recommended that tethering be used with small passerines (e.g., canaries, finches) as they are extremely fragile and their legs can easily be broken. When tethering, the following applies:
- a. Birds must be conditioned and sufficiently prepped when being tethered.
 - b. American Humane Society may limit the length of time a bird may be tethered. If birds fight against the tethers, flap excessively or tire, they must be immediately released from the tethers and not be used.
 - c. Monofilament or other lines may not be tied directly to a bird's leg.
 - d. The use of padding around the band portion of the tether and/or rubber bands to allow more "give" in the tether may also be used.
 - e. American Humane Certified Animal Safety Representatives must approve the action called for when birds are tethered and will have birds removed that are not properly prepared.
- 8-25.3 The use of glass panes around birds is not recommended.
- a. If glass is to be used, it must be sufficiently visually marked for birds so that they do not fly into it, which may be fatal.
 - b. Windows must also be sufficiently marked when flying or using birds inside residences or studios.
- 8-25.4 Wild populations of birds (e.g., seagulls, doves, sparrows, etc.) may not be mixed with tamed or trained studio birds for the purposes of filming. This safety precaution is also important to prevent disease transmission. (Also see *Wildlife Guidelines* at the end of this chapter.)
- 8-25.5* ... Cockfighting is prohibited by American Humane Society and most states and by federal law. Cockfighting paraphernalia also may be illegal in many areas. Please check laws, regulations and ordinances prior to staging such scenes.
- a. Aggressive birds may not be used. Birds may not be used to induce aggression in each other and must not be allowed to touch.
 - b. Combs and wattles of birds must be intact.
 - c. All cockfighting scenes must be strictly simulated, and productions and/or trainers are advised to contact American Humane Society regarding any scenes depicting cockfighting.
 - d. Cockfighting paraphernalia used on birds must be fake props.
- 8-25.6 When predator/prey relationships are to be depicted, animals must be trained or conditioned to accomplish the action, or the action must be simulated. Predator/prey situations can be a threat to one or more of the animals, as well as to cast and crew.