
1. PURPOSE

The intent of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to describe methods of assessing pain in birds and mitigating pain by administration of analgesic medications.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Principal investigator (PI) and their research staff, veterinary care staff.

3. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. A procedure which would be expected to be painful if it were done on humans must be considered painful to the animal.
- 3.2. When there is a question of whether or not a procedure is painful, the animal should receive the benefit of analgesia.
- 3.3. Analgesia should be provided at an appropriate dose and frequency to control pain.
- 3.4. Any deviation from this procedure must be justified by the investigator and approved by the appropriate Facility Animal Care Committee (FACC).

4. PAIN RECOGNITION AND ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. Adapt the frequency of observation to the invasiveness of the procedure (minimum once a day).
- 4.2. Start by observing the animal from a distance so the animal's behavior is not altered by the presence of the observer. Then proceed to observe the animal more closely.
- 4.3. Look for any changes in the behavior. Report animals which appear to be in pain to the veterinary care staff.
Note: The most reliable signs of pain and distress are the changes in behavior. This implies a good knowledge of species and individual normal behavior by the observer.
- 4.4. Birds do not exhibit obvious clinical signs of pain. Because birds can experience pain as mammals, the assumption is made by extrapolation from human observers.

5. ANALGESIA PLAN

- 5.1. If possible, provide analgesia before the painful stimulus, as it is more effective in preventing pain (e.g. give analgesic before surgery).
- 5.2. Use a combination of analgesics, which is often more effective than using a single agent. For example, a combination of opioid, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), and infiltration of a local analgesic.
- 5.3. For surgical procedures, extend analgesia from pre-op to 72 hours post-op, unless specified otherwise in the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) and approved by the FACC.

6. LOCAL ANALGESIA

6.1. Infiltrate or apply local analgesic to areas where a painful stimulus may be induced. Repeat application of local agent at specified intervals to maintain analgesia.

Analgesic	Dose	Route	Duration	Note
Lidocaine	< 2 mg/kg	SC, Infiltration of surgical wounds	30–60 min.	Use lidocaine HCl 2% (20mg/ml) injectable solution. Because this drug is acidic, it is recommended to dilute it 3:1 with sodium bicarbonate injectable solution (at 5 or 8.4%). Dilution must be prepared immediately before use and should not be stored. Diluted solution is as effective but induction of analgesia is slightly prolonged. *Dilution with sodium bicarbonate is not necessary if lidocaine is to be administered to an anesthetized animal.
Bupivacaine	< 2 mg/kg	SC, Infiltration of surgical wounds	3–4 hr.	Use bupivacaine HCl 0.50% (5mg/ml) injectable solution. Same comment as for lidocaine.
* Lidocaine-bupivacaine mixture	< 2 mg/kg	SC, Infiltration of surgical wounds	30 min. to 4 hrs.	Same comment as for lidocaine. Combining both drugs allows for rapid induction and prolonged effect. Use a 1:1 mixture of lidocaine HCl 2% (20mg/ml) injectable solution and bupivacaine HCl 0.50% (5mg/ml) injectable solution. Discard mixture after 3 months.
EMLA cream	Thick spread	Topical	30–60 min.	Remove feathers and apply a thick layer of cream ideally 10 minutes before the painful procedure. Apply only to intact skin.

*most commonly used

7. GENERAL ANALGESIA

Bird

Analgesic	Dose	Route	Frequency	Note
Buprenorphine	0.01–0.05 mg/kg	IM	8–12 hr.	Controlled drug.
Butorphanol	2–4 mg/kg	IM	4–6 hr.	Controlled drug.
*Meloxicam	0.2–0.3mg/kg 1-2 mg/kg	SC, PO IM	12-24 hr.	If given PO: Can be diluted in 2.5% dextrose. Shake vigorously before administration. Provide 1-2 drops onto the beak of the bird and watch for swallowing.
*Ketoprofen	2 mg/kg 5-10 mg/kg	SC IM	12–24 hr.	

*most commonly used

- 7.1. Administration of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):
 - 7.1.1. NSAIDs include ketoprofen and meloxicam.
 - 7.1.2. Ensure good water intake and monitor hydration status during the treatment period.
 - 7.1.3. To minimize chances for adverse drug interactions, a washout period of 5-7 days is recommended before switching between NSAIDs.

8. REFERENCES

- 8.1. Miller, K. A., Hill, N. J., Carrasco, S. E., & Patterson, M. M. (2019). Pharmacokinetics and Safety of Intramuscular Meloxicam in Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*). *Journal of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science* : JAALAS, 58(5), 589–593. <https://doi.org/10.30802/AALAS-JAALAS-19-000032>
- 8.2. Infiltrate or apply local analgesic to areas where a painful stimulus may be induced. Repeat application of Joint Working Group on Refinement. Laboratory birds: refinements in husbandry and procedures. Fifth report of BVA/AFW/FRAME/RSPCA/UFAW Joint Working Group on Refinement. *Lab Anim.* 2001;35 Suppl 1:1–163.

SOP REVISION HISTORY

DATE	NEW VERSION
2015.04.22	6.1 Use lidocaine HCl 2% (20mg/ml) injectable solution.
2015.04.22	6.1 Use bupivacaine HCl 0.50% (5mg/ml) injectable solution.
2015.04.22	6.1 Lidocaine-bupivacaine mixture: Discard mixture after 3 months.
2016.09.06	7. Ketoprofen and meloxicam: Ensure good water intake and monitor hydration status. Suspend water restriction prior to administration.
2016.09.06	5.2 For example, administer a combination of buprenorphine butorphanol , ketoprofen, and local infiltration of lidocaine a local analgesic .
2017.01.27	<p>7.1. Administration of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):</p> <p>7.1.1. NSAIDs include ketoprofen and meloxicam.</p> <p>7.1.2. Ensure good water intake and monitor hydration status during the treatment period.</p> <p>7.1.3. Suspend water restriction prior to administration of NSAIDs.</p> <p>7.1.4. To minimize chances for adverse drug interactions, a washout period of 5-7 days is recommended before switching between NSAIDs.</p>
2020.04.20	4.1. Adapt the frequency of observation to the protect invasiveness of the procedure (minimum once a day).
2020.04.20	6.1 (Added routes for local analgesics)
2020.04.20	6.1 Lidocaine-bupivacaine mixture: Use a 1:1 mixture of lidocaine HCl 2% (20mg/ml) injectable solution and bupivacaine HCl 0.50% (5mg/ml) injectable solution.
2020.04.20	6.1 EMLA cream: Apply only to intact skin.
2020.04.20	7. Meloxicam: dose 1-2 mg/kg IM
2020.04.20	7. Ketorprofen: dose 5-10 mg/kg IM
2020.04.20	<p>8.1 Miller, K. A., Hill, N. J., Carrasco, S. E., & Patterson, M. M. (2019). Pharmacokinetics and Safety of Intramuscular Meloxicam in Zebra Finches (<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>). <i>Journal of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science</i> : JAALAS, 58(5), 589–593. https://doi.org/10.30802/AALAS-JAALAS-19-000032</p> <p>8.2 Infiltrate or apply local analgesic to areas where a painful stimulus may be induced. Repeat application of Joint Working Group on Refinement. Laboratory birds: refinements in husbandry and procedures. Fifth report of BVA/AFW/FRAME/RSPCA/UFAW Joint Working Group on Refinement. <i>Lab Anim.</i> 2001;35 Suppl 1:1–163.</p>
2021.11.03	5.2. Try to Use a combination of analgesics, which is often more effective than using a single agent. For example, a combination of buprenorphine opioid, carprofen non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) , and local infiltration of lidocaine/bupivacaine a local analgesic .
2021.11.03	7.1.3. Suspend water restriction prior to administration of NSAIDs.