

Algoma University Animal Care Committee	
#AU 0002 Collection of Wild Birds	
Issue date: August 2010	Last revised: March/2025

1. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes acceptable procedures for collecting wild birds.

2. Policy

CCAC guidelines and regulations

3. Responsibility

Principal investigator, their research staff, and their student investigators

4. Training Required

Animal Research Ethics

Handling/training in the relevant species

Bio-methodology training in the relevant technique and species

5. Materials Required

Potter Trap

Sunflower Seeds

Cardboard box (divided into several separate compartments)

Bedding material

Holding bag

Mistnets and poles

6. Procedures

Procedure (Potter trap):

1. Potter traps are baited with sunflower seeds and are either set on the ground or hung from a tree branch. The door to the traps is set to “open” (see figure 1).

2. Potter traps are not left unattended at any time, unless the door is set to open and secured (to allow acclimation of birds to trap). Once a bird enters the trap, the door automatically closes, and the bird must be retrieved within 15 minutes.

3. A skilled bird-handler opens the door and grasps the bird gently in one hand, removing the bird from the trap. Any by-catch will be immediately released.

4. The bird may then be processed (see SOP #AU 0003) and banded (see SOP #AU 0004) if necessary.

5. The bird is placed in one compartment of a cardboard box or a holding bag, in which it remains for no longer than 1 hour.

Procedure (Mist net):

1. Mist net setup: Mist net poles will be made of galvanized steel or aluminum conduit or hard PVC.

a. To set up the net, the poles will be pounded into the ground and the end loops of the net will be secured over the base.

b. Mist net loops will then be spread evenly across the pole.

c. The net will then be unfurled and stretched tight (see figure 2).

d. Mist nets will be placed in or near habitats where the targeted species are likely to frequent. In some cases a decoy or recording of a song or avian predator may be used to attract a targeted individual into the net.

e. If nests of the target species are found, it will be acceptable to place nets such that the nesting adults are captured when leaving or coming to the nest.

2. Nets will be monitored continuously. Care will be taken while removing birds from the net so as not to subject them to injury and to minimize stress (see figure 3). Any by-catch will be immediately released.

3. The bird may then be processed (see SOP #AU 0003) and banded (see SOP #AU 0004) if necessary.



Figure 1: Potter's trap



Figure 2: Mist net being set up



Figure 3: Black-capped chickadee being removed from a mist net

7. References (if applicable)

REVISION HISTORY		
Revision #	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1	April 2011	
2	October 2018	
3	September 2022	
4	July 2024	Reformatted to new SOP template