

# **Humane Broiler Catching**

## **For Catching Crews**



Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs  
Association of Ontario Chicken Processors  
Chicken Farmers of Ontario

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# Introduction

Welfare includes both the physical and mental wellbeing of the broiler. Your actions impact on the welfare of the birds you catch.

Poor catching, handling and loading practices are sources of stress and trauma to broilers.

If catchers are careful, conscientious and properly supervised, then catchers can reduce the number of injuries to broilers.

**You can improve the welfare of broilers through your actions!**



# Introduction

# Why Treat Broilers Humanely?

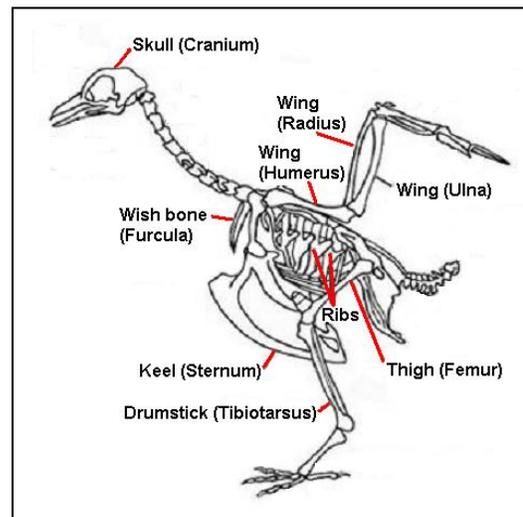
## It is Essential to Treat Broilers Carefully to:

- ✓ Prevent pain and fear
- ✓ Prevent death, bruising and skeletal trauma such as broken bones or dislocated bones = Reduces monetary losses
- ✓ It is the LAW!
- ✓ It's the RIGHT THING TO DO!

## Common Types of Trauma in Broilers:

- **Dislocated Leg (Femur)** from swinging birds by the legs
- **Broken Wing Bones (Radius, Ulna, Humerus)** as a result of crushing wings in the lids of crates
- **Crushed Skull (Cranium)** from trapping heads in the lids of crates
- **Fractured Wish Bone (Furcula)** from rough handling such as tossing birds or dropping them

## Diagram of a Broiler Skeleton



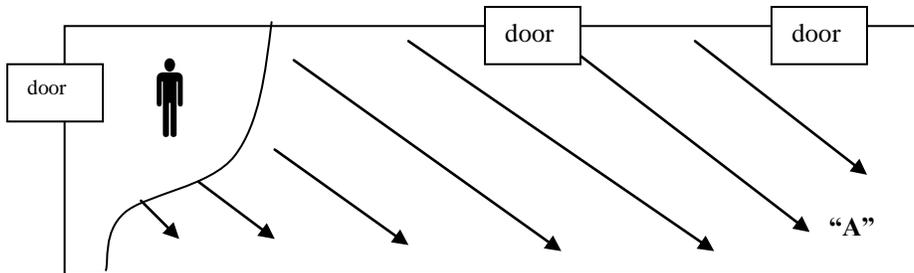
**By treating birds humanely, you can prevent pain and suffering.**

# Why Treat Broilers Humanely?

# Bird Behaviour

When you enter the bird's flight zone (the space surrounding the animal) it will move away or try to run past you.

When you walk through the barn, birds will move away from you as shown by the direction of the arrows in the diagram below:



In this diagram the potential danger is that birds may pile into corner "A" and smother each other. To avoid this problem, whenever possible, begin catching at the end of the barn opposite the doors.

## Always:

- ✓ Move quietly among birds to reduce fear
- ✓ Do not yell or shout
- ✓ Walk slowly among birds
- ✓ Watch for birds piling into corners – injuries or suffocation can occur from this

*Sssshhhh!*



# Bird Behaviour

# Humane Handling

## Handle Birds Carefully:

- Do **NOT** swing birds by the legs when you are carrying them
- Do **NOT** carry birds by wings or neck
- Do **NOT** carry more than **FOUR** birds in one hand, unless instructed by your supervisor
- Do **NOT** throw or drop birds
- Minimize passing of birds between people

## How Can I Tell When I Should Not Load a Bird?

Do not load a bird when it is:

- ✓ Unable to stand
- ✓ Obviously sick:
  - hunched
  - head drawn in
  - feathers ruffled
- ✓ Severely cut
- ✓ Not alert
- ✓ Very light

## Placing Birds in Crates

- Gently place birds into crates
- Ensure birds are in an upright position in the crate and all birds can rest on the floor
- Ensure all parts of the bird are inside the crate before closing the lid
- Your supervisor will tell you how many birds to put into a crate

Remember, birds **must** be treated carefully!

# Humane Handling

## What do I do With Sick or Injured Birds?

Point out an unfit bird to your supervisor and ask him or her what to do with it.

**SHOULD THIS BIRD BE LOADED?**  
Guidelines for Transporting Poultry

**DO NOT LOAD**  
DO NOT TRANSPORT

- Weak and/or not alert
- Dark red, purple, or black combs or wattles
- Discharge from eyes/nostrils
- Swollen head/neck
- Skin on head or neck is dark red or very pale (Exception: Toms may have bright blue skin in this area)
- Bloody and/or prolapsed vents
- Emaciated and weak: very thin, easily felt breastbone (Exception: End-of-lay hens may have pronounced breastbones but if emaciated they must not be loaded)
- Dislocated, broken, or exposed bones (including injury due to handling)
- Unable to rise or walk due to physical abnormality or injury

*Birds not loaded should be segregated according to on-farm protocol. Notify farm manager of birds left on the farm before leaving.*

**CAUTION**  
Conditions requiring assessment before loading

**Environmental**

- Wet birds in cool or cold weather
- Heat and/or humidity
- Cold and/or wind chill
- Road closures

**Individual Bird**

- Minor trauma, wounds or bleeding (including injury due to handling)

**Flock**

- Diarrhea
- Coughing and sneezing "snicking"
- If a flock is diagnosed with a disease by a veterinarian or laboratory, special provisions for loading may be required.

Assessment and joint decisions should be made by the producer, catching crew, hauler and processing plant when faced with CAUTION conditions.

**LOAD & TRANSPORT HEALTHY BIRDS**

**Regulations**

No person shall load or unload to be loaded... an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.

Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII, 136, 2a

**DO NOT**

- Transport a sick or injured bird
- Load or unload a bird in a way likely to cause injury or suffering
- Crowd birds to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering

[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

**Violators of the Health of Animals Act**

- Fines up to \$10,000
- Increased fines for repeat offenders
- Repeat offenders posted on CFIA website

See the "Should This Bird Be Loaded?" Handbook for more information.