



## AAV Position Statement Permanent Anatomic Alterations of Avian Species

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1. The AAV does not support any surgical procedure that permanently and irrevocably alters avian anatomic structure or function, with the following exceptions:
  - a. The procedure(s) is deemed necessary for the safety, health, husbandry, and well-being of the bird(s) and cannot be accomplished by other nonsurgical means such as an avicultural husbandry management practice.
  - b. The procedure(s) is humanely performed in a valid research setting where such a procedure(s) has been approved by an institutional animal care and use committee or an appropriate oversight organization that considers the procedure(s) necessary for the study.
  - c. The procedure(s) is deemed necessary by the administering veterinarian and is not on the list of condoned procedures in this statement.
2. The AAV does not condone any surgical procedure resulting in the permanent and irrevocable alteration of avian anatomic structure or function that is performed for purely cosmetic purposes or to modify the innate behavior of the bird(s) when other nonsurgical alternatives may be employed.
3. The AAV asserts that surgical cosmetic or behavior modification procedures may be associated with a high degree of risk to the patient, both intra- and post-operatively, and that such procedures are usually considered nonessential to the survival, health, and general welfare of the bird(s).
4. The AAV strongly supports the implementation of noninvasive methods such as avicultural husbandry management techniques or behavior modification procedures to achieve the desired outcome.
5. The AAV maintains that the tenets of this position statement do not extend to those avian species utilized in the food-animal industry.

The AAV further acknowledges that any of these surgical procedures may be performed legally, and that the AAV has no regulatory or legal authority over the practices of its members or associates.

### Condoned Surgical Procedures

1. Pinioning for de-flighting - Acceptable practice in birds that have injuries requiring amputation or in flighted species that are routinely kept in open enclosures. Not considered an acceptable practice in companion birds as a substitute for wing-feather trimming.
2. Phalanx amputation or de-toeing - Acceptable practice in those species where this is required by law established by regulatory authorities.
3. Ovariectomy and/or oviduct transection to reduce laying or caponizing to curb behavior abnormalities resulting from reproductive stress - Acceptable practice if performed humanely.

### Discouraged Surgical Procedures

1. Beak-splitting (mandibular bifurcation) to reduce aggression. Avicultural behavioral modification and proper husbandry practices are usually sufficient to resolve aggression tendencies in those species where this is a problem.



# Association of Avian Veterinarians

2. De-vocalization or de-voicing to reduce noise by surgical alteration of the syrinx or associated structures.

## **Behavior Modification Alternatives to Surgical Procedures**

1. Aviculture Management Procedures - Behavior problems such as mate aggression may be addressed using proper avicultural socialization and pairing techniques. If the birds have not been properly socialized to participate in breeding situations, or if the appropriate pairing approaches have not been utilized when introducing the birds, then the likelihood of a successful mating occurring is greatly reduced and the probability that injury may result is increased. Therefore, surgically altering either partner in this scenario will not achieve the desired outcome of a successful pairing. It is recommended that the client seek out the advice of an avian veterinarian skilled in aviculture management or a professional aviculturist familiar with the reproductive husbandry of the species in question.
2. Behavior Modification Employing a Veterinarian or Avian Consultant - Excessive vocalization, feather plucking, and biting may all be the result of improper socialization or avian behavior problems. Consulting an avian veterinarian or avian behavior consultant may help address some of these needs rather than resorting to surgical modification.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Dr. Robert Groskin at [rgroskin@aav.org](mailto:rgroskin@aav.org).