Bird Evacuation Preparation

Be prepared as the state of Florida is subject to hurricanes each season. A hurricane is a powerful storm, which causes damage not only to property but also to human life and even pets. With this in mind, what would you do with your beloved birds in case you needed to evacuate your home either from a hurricane, earthquake, tornado, flood, fire, explosion, hazardous spill, etc?

Our birds enhance our lives and they depend on us for their safety and survival. That being said, below are some helpful tips on how you can be prepared to not only protect yourself but your birds as well when disaster strikes.

**Have A Disaster Plan**

This goes for your birds also; they must be included in your plan. Different disasters require different responses. If you are prepared, then you can save their lives.

Planning and preparation will help you to evacuate with your birds quickly and safely. Keep in mind that some birds react differently under stress.

In case of a disaster and you need to evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your birds is to evacuate them too. It is not a good idea to leave your birds behind, even though you may think you have created a safe place for them. They could become injured, lost or worse. You should prepare yourself for the day when you and your birds may have to leave your home.

Birds should be transported in a secure traveling cage. If the weather is cold, have a blanket on hand to wrap the cage. Try and warm up the car before putting your birds inside. Have a misting bottle on hand during warmer weather, to mist your bird’s feathers. Do not put water inside the cage during transport. It may spill out and there would be no water for your birds, and also soil the bottom of the cage. If you have a protective water dish where water would not spill out, then go ahead and place water in the cage. You could possibly put a few slices of fresh fruits or veggies with high water content to help along the evacuation process instead of an unprotected water dish. If your traveling cage does not have perches, line it with paper towels. Under no circumstance let your birds out inside the car. Try and keep the cage in a quiet area. When you arrive to new surroundings, do not remove your birds from its cage. When birds are frightened, they may become aggressive or fly away. If electricity is available, many birds benefit from having a heating pad under their cage in times of stress. Blankets placed over the cage can also minimize stress.

**Where to Go?**

This is where you need to do some research ahead of time, have a plan in hand before disaster strikes:

Call hotels and motels, outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting birds. Find out what they require, how many birds you can bring, the size of the birds, the species. If you find you are constantly hitting a dead end with being told they do not accept birds, ask if "No Pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Remember if you have ample notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.

If you have friends or relatives outside the disaster area, find out if they could take care of your birds.

Find out if veterinarians would be able to shelter your birds in an emergency.
Is there a boarding facility that will take your bird? Boarding facilities may not accept your birds without proof of health. Make sure you have those documents. Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter for your birds in case of a disaster.

**Getting Supplies Together**

You should have essential supplies ready to go. Have them in a place in your home ready to go. Place them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily:

- Medications and medical records. If possible store in waterproof containers.
- First Aid Kit.
- Current photos of your birds, in case they get lost.
- Food and water. At least two weeks' supply. Make sure you have a sufficient water supply. Large water containers with chlorinated water (10 drops of chlorine bleach to each gallon of water) can be used to store water that prohibits bacterial growth. Store water away from sunlight. Place dry food (pelleted diets, seeds, dried fruits and veggies) in Tupperware like containers.
- Towels, newspaper for lining, dish soap, disinfectant, blanket/sheet to cover the cage, toys, hot water bottle, grooming supplies, and spray bottle for misting.
- If you have a large bird, you may need thick leather gloves in case your bird is injured or afraid.
- Transportable cage.
- Wire, pliers, and duct tape in case you have to repair your transportable cage.
- Have as much information on your birds as possible. Write down and affix to the back of your transportable cage in a waterproof container, i.e. zip lock bag, your name, phone number address, a description of your birds (distinguishing marks, ages, breed, sex, etc.), the name of your birds, leg band or microchip ID, if any; pet insurance policy number, any medical needs, the address and phone number where you or a contact person can be reached if you are not at home. Name of your veterinarian, feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and copies of proof of ownership papers.
- Flashlight
- Garbage bags

In addition to the items listed above, include anything else you use for your birds on a weekly or monthly basis. Include a calendar showing when certain items should be replaced.

**Help...Disaster Is On Its Way**

Most of the time warnings are issued hours, even days in advance. At the first sign of disaster, act to protect your birds. Go ahead and call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangement for you and your birds. Make sure you have everything in order for your disaster supplies and are ready to take at a moment's notice.

You may not be home at the time an evacuation comes down. See if you can find a trusted neighbor who would be willing to take your birds and meet you at a prearranged location. Make sure you have the right person who will be comfortable with going to retrieve your birds from your home, know where your disaster supplies are kept and have a key to your home.
**Hotels/Motels That Are Pet Friendly**

Below is a list of hotels/motels with 800 numbers (USA) that are supposedly pet friendly. I would call way head of time to see which hotel/motel would accommodate your birds in your state. I am not too sure if these hotels/motels would accommodate outside of the United States, but now would be a good time to call to find out and be prepared:

- Best Western Inns 1-800-528-1234
- Clarion Hotels 1-800-252-7466
- Comfort Inns 1-800-228-5150
- Days Inn 1-800-329-7466
- Econo Lodge 1-800-553-2666
- Holiday Inn 1-800-465-4329
- Howard Johnson 1-800-465-4329
- La Quinta Inn 1-800-531-5900
- Masters Econo Inns 1-800-633-3434

- Motel 6 1-800-466-8356
- Quality Inn 1-800-228-5151
- Ramada Inn 1-800-228-2828
- Red Roof Inn 1-800-843-7663
- Residence Inn 1-800-331-3131
- Roadway Inn 1-800-228-2000
- Sleep Hotels 1-800-753-3746
- Super 8 Motels 1-800-800-8000

If you must evacuate, do not leave your birds behind. Evacuate them to a pre-arranged safe location if they cannot stay with you. Unfortunately, Red Cross Shelters do not house any pets.

**After The Danger Has Passed**

Check your birds for injury and exposure to any chemicals of any kind. Contact your veterinarian if you have any concerns.

Please keep an eye on your birds closely for several days after the disaster. Many can show signs of disease several days following a stressful episode. Consult a veterinarian immediately at any signs of lethargy, loss of appetite, loose stool, depression, injury, or sitting on a cage bottom.

If you have to move to another location, do not remove your birds from its cage until it is calm, then do it in a closed environment. Frightened birds may become aggressive or fly away.

Let your bird have plenty of uninterrupted sleep to recover from the stress and trauma. Birds will usually remain calm in isolated, darkened areas with cages covered.

I do hope this helps and puts some of you at ease in case of an emergency.