

Bird Behaviour in Shows 29th October 2019

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What We Want



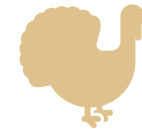
Perfect weather – sunny but not hot, breezy but not gusty, bright and clear



Perfect staffing – enough, fully trained people who were there the day before...



Perfect birds performing behaviours immediately on cue and without hesitation or error



Every. Day.

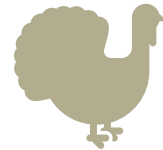


How unrealistic?!

What We Get



Whatever weather the
world fancies – sometimes
ALL the weather



Birds who (just like us)
have off moments, or days



Well trained staff, but who
may not have been in or
on Birds the day before



Public...



Some Thoughts for Daily Shows



It is incredibly rare for us to cancel a show outright – flying birds is the best part of our day...and theirs!



98% of the time we will start, even in inclement weather, and see what happens!



Even if a bird didn't do great the day before, it gets to fly



We adjust content and behaviours WHILE the show is on if needed



We trust our cover keepers to do this when we are not in

If Things Go Wrong

We DO NOT



Panic



Assign blame



Run



Bring nets or towels



Fly another bird



Alarm the audience
or end the show
abruptly

We DO

Remain calm

Ask Questions

Listen

Communicate

Ensure we have the correct food items

Have a glove if needed

Try to get or maintain sight of the bird

Use telemetry if relevant

Consider natural history of the species

Consider individual history of the bird – has it flown off before? Where to?

Consider what behaviours the bird is fluent in – can these be used?

Cancel our evening plans!

Start praying to a God we don't believe in

Consider our options for if the bird is not back by darkness

Go above and beyond to ensure the safe return of the bird

Scenarios

Bombora: Flies to floor with 'Betty the Butterfly', keeper tries to take it from him but he flies up to aviary roof. Ignores keeper and continues to slam 'Betty'.

Do we call a Cat F?

No. He is in sight, still in the area. If he is up there for over 5 mins, the show will be ended. Head Keeper should be informed, but no assistance is required at this time. Will escalate to Cat F if he leaves the site.

What do we do?

- Try to get his attention using a catch, or a preferred keeper
- Try to resume routine
- Offer different food items to exchange for 'Betty'
- Wait until he is interested in responding to keepers
- Keep eyes on him at all times
- Once he comes back to the lawn, his routine should be resumed and he should exit as normal

Should he fly again tomorrow?

Yes. If this happens again, Nicky/Tom will look at ways to adjust his routine to make this less likely to occur in the future.



Scenarios

Maple: Starts staring into the sky, hunches over, eyes pin. She then flies past her aviary and into the woods behind birds.

Do we call a Cat F?

Yes. Maple has a history of being very nervous outside her immediate environment. We will need people to help locate her and then back away and leave Bird Team to it unless further assistance is required.

What do we do?

- Get the keeper she is most comfortable with that day to watch her and call to her to see if we can elicit a response (squeaking)
- Get that keeper moving around close to her and see if she will focus on them
- One keeper to remain in arena to call her to a familiar post if possible
- Keeper can attempt to call her to glove
- If successful keeper should attempt to walk her back towards Bird gate, but be prepared to restrain her on the way back if she is unsettled
- On arrival back in Birds her usual exit should be attempted if she has not been restrained. If she has, she will be put away by that keeper.

Should she fly again tomorrow?

Yes. Ideally her most familiar (favourite) keepers should fly her.



Scenarios

Sally: While flying with the SAK she takes a piece of food and goes to sit on Stella's roof. She is holding food in her beak.

Do we call a Cat F?

No. She is in sight, in the Bird area and not going anywhere if her history counts for anything. Head Keeper to be alerted after 5 mins, but no assistance is required at this time.

What do we do?

- One keeper to remain in the area and watch her.
- Another keeper to take over the SAK
- Wait until she is ready to move again....this could take some time
- If necessary, climb up a ladder and step her onto the glove. She can then be taken home.

Should she fly again tomorrow?

Yes. She should be flown by keepers and kept short.



Scenarios

Phoenix: Flies to the pond to chase a moorhen.

Do we call a Cat F?

No. He has been to the pond before, it is onsite and his history suggests he will come back fairly quickly. If he leaves the site a CAT F should be called. If he catches a moorhen Head Keepers should be notified.

What do we do?

- Get sight of him ASAP
- Attempt to use the 'catch' prompt to get him back to the lawn
- If he is successful in hunting, follow him (at a distance) to his 'safe place' (usually under a bush or similar)
- Ensure you have a glove and food items to exchange for the 'item'
- If you can, cover the 'item' and offer the glove with food in it.
- Remove the 'item' and hand to another keeper or hide under a jumper/fleece etc (make sure it is dead first – if not, hand to a keeper to remove from the area)
- Get Phoenix back to the lawn area either on the glove or by hopping from post to post.
- Exit as normal

Should he fly again tomorrow?

Yes. Keep him short and focused with a high rate of reinforcement for short and easy, well rehearsed behaviours

Scenarios

Gertie: When circuiting, flies completely out of sight and does not come back into view for several minutes.

Do we call a Cat F?

No. Because of the behaviour we have reinforced, we expect large, ranging circuits. If not back in view after 5 mins, Head Keepers should be informed. No assistance is required at this time.

What do we do?

- Remain on the lawn, in usual position
- Use tower to gain height and see if she is still flying, above the trees or carpark maybe
- Use whistle to call her back to the area
- If not in sight, Gertie trained keepers should collect gloves, whistles and food (and radios) and start walking, slowly, one through the car park, one down the road behind birds
- If still no sight, a CAT F can then be called
- We still want her to come back to the arena if possible
- Reinforce heavily on her return and put away

Should she fly again tomorrow?

Yes. Keep short, only asking for a couple of circuits.



Scenarios

Storm: When circuiting, flies completely out of sight and does not come back into view for several minutes.

Do we call a Cat F?

No. Because of the behaviour we have reinforced, we expect large, ranging circuits. If not back in view after 5 mins, Head Keepers should be informed. No assistance is required at this time.

What do we do?

- Remain on the lawn, in usual position
- Use tower to gain height and see if she is still flying, above the trees or carpark maybe
- Use 'catch' prompt to get her in the air if she has landed
- Telemetry should be collected and used to find which direction she is in
- Keepers should collect food (and radios) and start walking towards the signal, remembering to triangulate the telemetry frequently
- At this point, a CAT F can then be called
- We still want her to come back to the arena if possible
- Reinforce heavily on her return and put away

Should she fly again tomorrow?

Yes. Keep short, only asking for a couple of circuits.



Scenarios

Flint: Has been out overnight and is found sitting on the floor the next morning

Do we call a Cat F?

CAT F is ongoing from the previous day.

What do we do?

- Keepers will have been out since first light, searching for him
- If spotted, try to call him up to the glove
- Alternatively use his 'run behaviour' to build momentum and give him a chance to be reinforced
- Ask another keeper to be on standby with a crate and vehicle if necessary
- If he comes to glove and is NOT on section, he should be restrained and transported back to the section or to a waiting vehicle safely
- If he IS on the section, he can be walked back towards aviary and exited as normal

Should he fly again tomorrow?

Yes. Keep short, only asking for short, well rehearsed behaviours.



Scenarios

If a bird (any bird) is still out at the end of the workday

Do we call a Cat F?

CAT F is ongoing.

What do we do?

Keepers will be out until dark and back before first light, looking for the bird. They will have keys, radios, food and any other required equipment and will be in regular contact with Nicky & Tom, Head Keepers or duty managers. At 0800 at least one keeper will return to section to complete essential tasks while other staff continue to search. If the bird is not located this search will continue until it is. (Locating the bird is our main priority). Once the bird is located, the keeper the bird is most familiar with should attempt to call it down (the plan for this will be determined by the keeper most familiar with the bird who is present, or in communication with Nicky/Tom)

No other birds are to be flown. Shows will be cancelled with a keeper explaining the situation and feeding birds at show time with any audience members. If the bird is far from the zoo it is possible to get Scally or Stella out.

Should the bird fly again tomorrow?

If retrieved after one night out, the bird will be given that day off but can be flown the next day.



Scenarios

If a bird (any bird) has been out overnight or for multiple nights

Do we call a Cat F?

CAT F is ongoing.

What do we do?

Continue searching for the bird. As time goes on, fewer keepers will be available to assist with this but at least one should be out at all times. Once located, in this instance it may be necessary to restrain the bird in order to get it back to the zoo, however we would always prefer the bird to fly back to the lawn and exit as normal.

Should he fly again tomorrow?

The bird may need some rest to regain energy and muscle lost from being out for several days. It will not be flown immediately, but within a few days.



If a bird (any bird) flies into Lynn or Peter's garden

Do we call a Cat F?

If the bird is settled, NO. If it looks like it may fly again, YES (depending on the individual)

What do we do?

Keepers can access the gardens via gates from the zoo. Please inform Lynn ASAP if entering either garden, or ask Head Keepers or Section Leaders to do this for you. Be aware that if you move anything in either garden, it must be returned to its original position before leaving. Do not leave anything in the gardens. Try to call the bird back to the flying arena, or to the hand/glove.

Should the bird fly again tomorrow?

Yes.



If a bird (any bird) flies onto private land outside the zoo.

Do we call a Cat F?

Yes. If the bird has left the zoo and keepers are following it this is a CAT F situation.

What do we do?

Keepers should ask Head Keepers or Lynn to contact the land owners ASAP, however if you are in uniform and explain politely to the land owners the situation, we have not had any problems and most are very helpful and happy for us to be on their land temporarily.
Try to locate and call the bird back as usual.

Should the bird fly again tomorrow?

Yes, assuming it is retrieved that day.



Next Steps....

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- Alerting the IBR – all our birds have IBR rings and are registered. This means we can contact them and if the bird is recovered by anyone else the IBR will call us.

 - Giving up....this is a very difficult decision to make and will never be taken lightly. Once Nicky and Tom feel we have exhausted all possible courses of action. The timescale for this will be different for each bird so there is not a standard answer. It is something we never want to do.

Any Questions???

