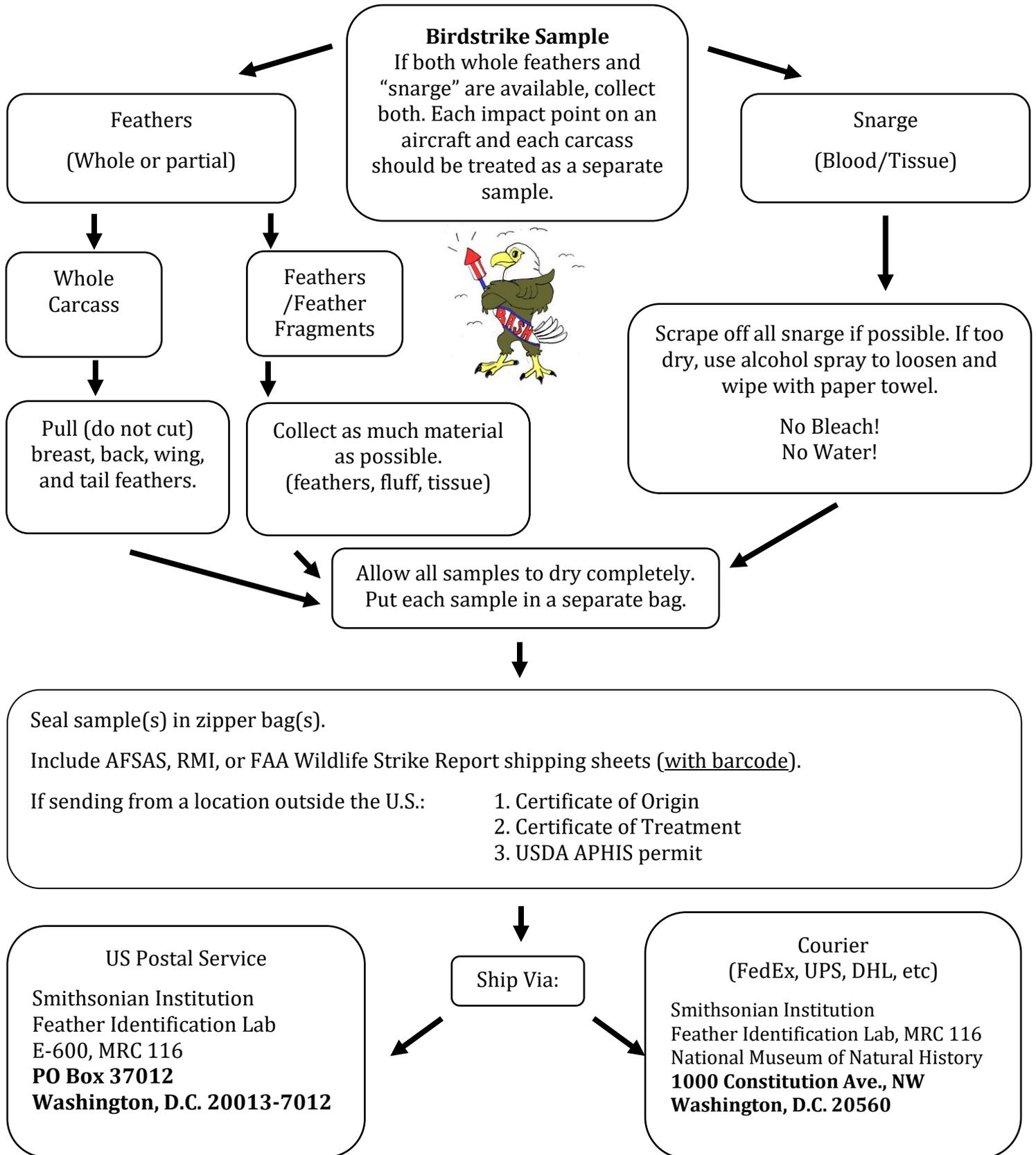


# How To Collect Birdstrike Evidence



(Revised Sept. 2022)

# GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING BIRDSTRIKE MATERIAL

Feather Identification Lab, Smithsonian Institution

---

## COLLECTING REMAINS

- Always include any feather material available
- Always secure all remains in re-sealable plastic bag

### Feathers:

- Whole/Partial Bird - Pluck a variety of feathers (breast, back, wing, tail) with color or pattern
- Feathers only - Send all material available
- Do not cut feathers from the bird (we need the downy part at the base of the feathers)
- Do not use any sticky substance (no tape or glue)

### Tissue/blood (“Snarge”):

- Dry material - Scrape or wipe off into a clean re-closeable bag **or** wipe area with pre-packaged alcohol wipe **or** spray with alcohol to loosen material then wipe with clean cloth/gauze. (\*please do not use water, bleach, or other cleansers – they destroy DNA)
- Fresh material – Wipe area with alcohol wipe and/or clean cloth/gauze **or** apply fresh tissue/blood to an FTA@DNA collecting card

---

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Include copy of printed report with barcode (AFSAS, RMI, or FAA Wildlife Strike Report)
- Materials coming from outside the US must include:
  1. Certificate of Origin
  2. Certificate of Treatment
  3. USDA APHIS Permit

---

## SHIPPING

### US Postal Service

(regular/non-damaging strikes)

Smithsonian Institution  
Feather Identification Lab  
E-600, MRC 116  
**PO Box 37012**  
**Washington, D.C. 20013-7012**

### Courier (FedEx, UPS, etc.)

(overnight priority/damaging strikes)

Smithsonian Institution  
Feather Identification Lab, MRC 116  
National Museum of Natural History  
**1000 Constitution Ave., NW**  
**Washington, D.C. 20560**

---

## WEBSITES

Birdstrike Committee USA  
Air Force  
Civil Aviation  
Navy/US Marine Corps

[www.birdstrike.org](http://www.birdstrike.org)  
[www.afsec.af.mil/organizations/bash](http://www.afsec.af.mil/organizations/bash)  
[wildlife.faa.gov](http://wildlife.faa.gov)  
<https://navalsafetycenter.navy.mil/> [navigate to RMI]

---

## FEATHER LAB CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone: 202-633-0801

[dovec@si.edu](mailto:dovec@si.edu)

[whattonj@si.edu](mailto:whattonj@si.edu)

[dahlanno@si.edu](mailto:dahlanno@si.edu)

[luttrells@si.edu](mailto:luttrells@si.edu)

# “MAKE-YOUR-OWN” - BIRDSTRIKE COLLECTING KITS

***Birdstrike Collecting Kits*** are cheap to make and easy to assemble. Having pre-made kits available improves birdstrike reporting and encourages the sampling of birdstrike remains. Most folks assemble the contents into individual bags or envelopes and keep a supply in field vehicles or office supply cabinets for quick access. Below is a list of recommended items to include in your birdstrike collecting kits. Mix and match as budgets permit.

---

## MATERIALS

### **Re-sealable plastic bags**

A variety of sizes for various amounts of debris; Re-sealable bags help contain liquids and keep odors to a minimum.

### **Sharpie Markers**

Permanent markers are water resistant and used for writing data (date, time, aircraft, etc) directly on the bag of remains.

### **Alcohol Wipes**

Pre-packaged alcohol hand-wipes can be used to wipe “snarge” off aircraft. Alcohol is better than water at preserving DNA, preventing mold growth, and is more sanitary for humans. Ideally, use ethanol (also called ethyl alcohol) 70% or higher concentration if available. Alcohol content should be a minimum of 40% or greater. Alternatively, use a spray bottle with 70% alcohol to spray the area before wiping with paper towels. **\*Do not** use wipes with bleach or other cleansers, it destroys DNA.

### **FTA® Micro Card and Sterile Applicators**

If you send a lot of fresh blood/tissue samples for DNA identification, you may want to look into getting Whatman FTA® DNA cards. The material is sampled with a sterile applicator and placed onto the surface of the card that “fixes” the DNA in the sample. For more information on ordering these items contact the Feather Lab.

\*Note: If you only occasionally send blood/tissue samples, a paper towel with alcohol, or alcohol wipe is still a good option for this type of material.

### **Miscellaneous Items for Birdstrike Collecting**

Kitchen shears – good for cutting feet, wings, bills (but DO NOT CUT FEATHERS)  
Tongue depressors, tweezers, cotton swabs/cotton-tipped applicators

### **Extra Safety Items**

Hand sanitizing gels

Latex Gloves

Protective Eyewear/Safety Glasses

Face Masks (if avian flu is a concern): the CDC recommends NIOSH rated N95 face masks. (These may be referred to as respirators -There is a disposable version of these masks by 3M that looks similar to the regular “cup” style face masks.)

## REMINDERS

- Always encourage proper hygiene & provide personnel easy access to cleaning/hygiene supplies.
- Do not cut off the fluffy down at the bottom of feathers.
- Do not use water, bleach or other cleansers on samples.
- Be sure personnel are briefed on proper carcass disposal protocols.
- Stay informed to the status of the HPAI H5N1 avian flu virus.
- If sending from overseas include:
  1. Certificate of Origin
  2. Certificate of Treatment
  3. USDA APHIS permit

---

## HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCES

The following websites have excellent coverage on current avian flu and zoonotic disease info:

**U.S. Geological Survey Wildlife Health Center**

<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/>

**The American Ornithologists' Union Ornithological Council**

<https://birdnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Avian-Influenza-Fact-Sheet-2020.pdf>

---

## FEATHER LAB CONTACT INFORMATION



Smithsonian

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Phone   | (202) 633-0801  |
| Email   | dovec@si.edu<br>whattonj@si.edu<br>dahlanno@si.edu<br>luttrells@si.edu  |
| Address | Feather Identification Lab<br>Smithsonian Institution<br>E-600, MRC 116<br>PO Box 37012<br>Washington, D. C. 20013-7012 |