Types of Banding & Identification: Open and Closed Bands, Microchips

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Either at home, or when traveling with your bird, there is always the possibility that the bird could escape to the outdoors. For this reason, every bird needs identification just as other companion animals do. The traditional and most common way of identifying individual birds is by banding. Bands can be either open or closed, using either steel or aluminum.
Open bands: Open bands are put on adult birds using a tool that crimps the metal around the leg. This type is typically used on older, imported birds after they finish their quarantine. The band will have a mark identifying the quarantine station.

Closed bands: Closed bands are slipped over the feet of young birds who then grow into the band. The band is engraved with a combination of design, numbers, or letters to identify the bird's breeder and sometimes the date of birth.

The state or federal government may regulate the type of identification used. Write down the number on your bird's band and keep it in a safe place, just in case your bird is lost or stolen.

Microchips: Microchips such as those used in dogs and cats are also available for identifying birds, and can be used in addition to a leg band. The chip is about the size of a grain of rice and is inserted with a needle into the breast muscle. The chip contains a unique number for each individual. The owner then sends the information to a registering agency along with current contact and alternate contact information in the event the bird becomes lost. When a bird is found, any agency with a scanner, including many animal care and control agencies, veterinary clinics, and research labs, can quickly identify a code that links the animal to its owner through a national database. The American Kennel Club (AKC) has a microchip registration service for any animal or bird that has been microchipped. Call the AKC at 800-252-7894 for further information.

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