

Ambassador Feeder

ARRIVING ON TIME AND CONSISTENCY OF ATTENDING SHIFTS

- The shift occurs on the same day every week
 - *Occasional time off can be accommodated*
- Shift starts at 9:30 am when the volunteer attends a check-in meeting with staff
- Shift ends when the volunteer has completed their routine checklist
- Typical shifts are 3-4 hours
- A commitment to volunteering in the Ambassador Feeder program for a minimum of 1 year

INCLEMENT WEATHER

During certain times of the year, the weather prohibits volunteers from being able to do their shifts safely. It is your responsibility as a feeder to check the weather forecast for the time of your shift. If there is inclement weather your shift may be cancelled, otherwise it is your choice to determine what is best for you. If it is snowing or thunder storming and you are nervous about coming in for your shift, please stay home. However, you should still follow the directions below if missing a shift due to weather conditions.

ABSENCES

In the event of an absence (planned or otherwise) the appropriate staff should be notified by the volunteer.

If needing to miss a shift within 48 hours of the shift, volunteers should call the Rehabilitation Center line at 704-875-6521 x 125 and leave a voicemail. The voicemail does not need to state information other than who they are and what shift they will be missing. You should also email the RBC team in case of any miscommunication.

If missing a shift for a planned absence or outside of the 48-hour window, volunteers should contact the RBC team via email.

Please email rbc@carolinaraptorcenter.org

EMERGENCIES

If an injury occurs to either guest, staff, or bird, notify staff immediately. Call the Rehabilitation line.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Should be kept put away when in sight of visitors. *Exception- Using your phone to fact check or play some media to enhance the visitor's experience.

Volunteers should always appear approachable and ready to assist visitors.

COMMUNICATION WITH VISITORS

As a volunteer, you are always a representative of CRC to the public. When you are out on the display trail caring for the birds, a visitor may stop you to ask a question. You are an important part of the visitor's experience and will want to make it a positive one. Please use the following guidelines when answering the public's questions.

1. Never raise your voice at a visitor.
2. When people ask a question, if you do not know the answer, just say, "I don't know that's a great question!" or refer them to another volunteer. Never, ever make up answers. Distributing incorrect or misleading information to the public can give our organization a bad reputation and it can also cause people to be misinformed about raptors. Ask staff for more information if you are not sure of an answer.
3. If you have read something in a book, on the Internet, or saw something on TV, do not assume it is true. Ask a staff person before giving the information to the public. You would be amazed at the amount of inaccurate information regarding raptors.
4. If you do hear another volunteer tell the public something that to your knowledge is incorrect, wait until they have finished talking, then take them to one side and ask the person where they got their information. (Even if it is a volunteer who has been here longer than you.) If neither of you is sure who is correct, ask a staff person. If you do not feel comfortable questioning another volunteer, tell a staff person what you heard and who said it so that the information can be verified. Remember that this is not a judgment of who is right or wrong but a continuing commitment to EXCELLENCE in ALL we do.

PERSONAL VISITORS

Friends and family should not "hang out" with you while you are volunteering.

Why? Volunteers should be engaged and focused on their tasks.

Volunteers with personal visitors must check in with Visitor Services staff. Personal visitors must always remain on public trails and are not allowed access to education trails, rehabilitation trails, or trails behind enclosures.

BIRD BEHAVIOR

RBC volunteers are encouraged to voice their concerns about a birds' condition, behavior or weight to senior Bird Care Staff, an Education staff member or Rehab staff member. If they feel

that verbal concerns are not addressed adequately and promptly, use written communication with RBC members or via email if you remember at a later time.

Feeding with a bird inside:

When feeding enclosures with birds inside, careful consideration should be made to ensure that feeding strategies do not place excess stress on the birds. Stress may be caused by over-stimulation, or distress from being placed in a situation which causes fear or loss of control. Some of the signs of stress may include but are not limited to; tight grip on the perch, panting, biting, dilating pupils, loose stools and/or watery mutes, feathers pulled in tight to the body, wrists held slightly away from body and wings dropping, “whiny” vocalizations, gular fluttering, and escape and avoidance behaviors – such as quick darting look or crouching. Other behaviors such as hackling, hissing/clacking, mantling, are also indicators of stress that are to be avoided.

To avoid these behaviors, feeders should be aware of the bird's location and behavior throughout the feeding process. Birds should be given enough space to safely fly or move away from the feeder as you pick up leftovers and place down new food.

Feeders are not allowed to forcibly remove birds from areas to clean. This includes but is not limited to; shaking perches, walking abruptly/in close proximity to birds, spraying them with a hose, using the rake or other tools to move birds away, etc. If a bird does not move from a perch/area on their own, cleaning of that area will be postponed.

Below is a chart with the course of action to be taken based on bird behavior when cleaning enclosures.



Bird Health and Wellbeing

Wild animals instinctually mask injuries and illnesses to prevent predation in the wild. Ambassador Feeders must be diligent, keen observers of all collection animals. Subtle changes in behavior can be key indicators of illness. A visual and behavioral assessment should be performed of each animal during every shift. Each animal is an individual, and Feeders must learn what is “normal” for each animal. Report any evidence of illness, injury, or abnormal behavior to the Bird Care Staff immediately.

Common signs of injury may include:

- Lethargy or laying down
- Closing one or both eyes

- Lameness or limping
- Wing droop

LOCKS AND LATCHES and DOUBLEDOR SYSTEM

Enclosures are secured with both an outer lock and with latches. Latches are generally located by the door handle on the inside and outside of the door. Some doors which are warped or have gaps that a predator could crawl through will have additional latches to secure the door. When entering an enclosure with a bird inside you will always unlatch the door to enter and then latch the door behind you to keep the bird from escaping. Always lock the enclosure when you leave even if the bird is not in the enclosure. Should you encounter a lock which will not open WD40® is located in the RBC room in the cabinet under the computer.

All enclosures have a system of two doors that prevents the escape of birds while feeders are entering/exiting enclosures. These areas are known as a "double door system/area" or "keeper area". At least one set of doors must be latched shut at all times during entering or exiting. When the feeder is fully inside or outside of the enclosure, both doors should be latched/locked. Report damaged locks and latches to senior staff and record it in the "Maintenance Log." In case of a bird escape, senior staff should be notified immediately. Refer to the protocol for Escaped Animals.

INSPECTING ENCLOSURES

Providing our animals with a clean, safe habitat is critical for optimal welfare. Feeders should inspect the enclosures for any signs of disrepair.

The following should be reported to Bird Care Staff and recorded on the "Maintenance Log" located in the Resident Bird Care room:

- Missing turf on perches
- Loose or rotten posts/perches/walls
- Exposed nails or screws
- Missing large amount of substrate
- Broken latches/locks
- Holes in a wall or roof
- Signs of predator entry
- Damage to signs