

USDA Regulations on Birds

On February 21, 2023, APHIS published a final rule in the Federal Register establishing new welfare standards for birds. These regulations ensure the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of birds regulated under the Animal Welfare Act. These new regulations were phased in for the past year and are in full effect since February 21, 2024.

We have watched as the bird world debated, studied and explained how the new regulations may impact our members. As responsible bird owners, we hope to encourage ownership of Fife Fancy canaries and we respect the attempt to insure proper care and breeding of birds. However, from a practical viewpoint, we have been concerned about how these new regulations may affect our hobby.

We are happy to say, as canary owners, breeders, and exhibitors, most of our members will see no changes to their personal Fife Life. We may notice the occasional side effect in situations where we interact with other people, such as buying or selling birds.

Below is a brief summary of how the regulations are applied, in the case of the average IFFCA member.

- 1) If you own, or breed, canaries **for your own use and enjoyment**, the regulations do not apply to you at all. You may breed 100's of birds as long as they are for your own use. However, if you receive even a \$1 're-homing fee' from another person in exchange for one of your birds, you need to look deeper.
- 2) **The canary is considered an established common household pet**, and therefore exempt from the many regulations imposed on other exotic or larger species.
- 3) If you **sell 200 or less** small birds, bred by yourself on your premises, in one calendar year, you are exempt from registration. You can breed more than 200 birds, as long as you sell no more than 200 in one year. It does not matter how you sell: online, by mail, website, online classifieds, etc. Person to person sales at bird shows are exempt from registration.
- 4) If you **exhibit your own birds at bird fancier shows**, you will not need to be registered. You may transport your own birds to and from shows.
- 5) There are no governmental regulations on breeders shipping their own birds, even as part of a sale. All USDA rules regarding shipping need to be met by the shipping company, such as USPS, Delta, or other. These shippers have set out guidelines and requirements for bird shipments, in order to comply with the regulations they need to follow.

The good news is: the average club member will be able to continue keeping, breeding, showing our birds and acquiring new stock, in the traditional ways we have found most convenient!

For a simple video explanation from the USDA: [on the USDA website](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/awa/bird-standards)

(<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/awa/bird-standards>)

Six videos presented by Organization of Professional Aviculturists 2023-2024

<https://www.opabirds.org/virtualqa>