

Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2026

3:30 pm – Bruner Hall of Science 326

Present: Betty Jacques (Chair), Jeramie Ellis, Austin Nuxoll, Robin Harding, Brad Krohn, Chris Waples (ex officio)

Absent: Alison Klein, Drew Proski, Bryce Abbey

Jacques (Chair) called meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Nuxoll (Harding) moved to approve minutes from the February 9, 2026 meeting. Motion passed: 4-0.

Discussion of Protocols Under Review

Cooper, Jacob: UNK:00001566 – Sequencing blood, tissue, and fecal samples from birds (Aves)

[Project 1: Obtaining samples]: Samples will be obtained per IACUC protocols from wild birds that *do not* show any signs of potential avian flu. In brief, these protocols involve capturing live, wild birds and obtaining small amounts of blood from the brachial vein and/or obtaining parasite and feather samples from the individuals. Birds will be released unharmed after being banded and after having bleeding stopped with QuickStop and being evaluated for condition. Additional tissue, genomic, and parasite samples may be obtained from deceased birds, specifically windowkills on campus or roadkill. Our research predominately focuses on passerine songbirds, including orioles, sparrows, blackbirds, etc. Handling of doves and pigeons, passerines, and near passerines is authorized by USGS Federal Banding Permit #24350 to Dr. Letty Reichart. Other species may be added to this permit in the near future (including owls). USGS collecting permits and NGPC collecting and banding permits are pending. Blood will be collected in capillary tubes and stored in buffer or preserved on paper materials such as Whatman cards. Fecal samples will likewise be stored on materials such as Whatman cards. All cards will be stored in freezers at UNK. Tissue samples will be derived from specimens prepared at UNK, with tissue (usually muscle tissue) preserved in small vials in freezer. Parasites associated with the birds will be incidentally collected when possible (e.g., ticks, hypoboscids) and promptly killed and stored in ethanol tubes.

[Project 2: Processing samples]: Samples will be processed using standardized genomics procedures, including using QIAGEN DNeasy kits for digestion. Other studies on samples performed may include examining blood under a microscope to observe the presence of parasites like malaria or performing gel assays to determine bird sex or confirm if processes are performing correctly. Students will be required to wear gloves when handling any samples at UNK, and samples will only be manipulated within designated spaces for performing genomic analyses. After DNA extraction is completed, these products will be sequenced locally or sent to sequencing facilities at other institutions for obtaining data. Sending samples off often requires storing them in a stable buffer, and at this stage, DNA is fragmented to facilitate reading sequences.

Discussion

- No immediate concerns about plan for collecting information.

- Question about PPE for sampling in the field.
 - No specifically-imposed PPE requirements, as risk to researcher is low for small songbirds and Krohn stated that the use of gloves could create additional risks for the animals.

Nuxoll (Ellis) moved to approve protocol as written. Motion passed: 4-0.

Other Business:

Waples and Jacques briefly asked the committee for thoughts about use of checklist(s) for reviewing NuRamp protocols in the future. All committee members were supportive. Waples indicated that, once drafted, any checklists would be shared with the committee for feedback.

Jacques (Chair) adjourned meeting at 3:38 PM.