

KEEL SCORING CHART FOR BIRDS AT NORTH CAROLINA ZOO

The drawings below represent a cross section through the body of a bird. The central black triangle represents the keel bone and the lines on either side indicate the amount of pectoral muscle tissue on both sides of the keel.

- A healthy bird will usually have a Keel Score of 3.5 to 4.5
- A Keel Score of less than 2 usually indicates severe emaciation
- Pectoral mass size is somewhat species-specific and can be influenced by things such as:
 - a) pinioning or prolonged housing in enclosures that provide limited or no opportunity to exercise the pectoral muscles
 - b) pre-migratory fattening or post migratory weight loss in long distance migrant species

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