

## Protocols for Feather Collection

- 1) Place microtube in rack, open it and fill with ~1.0 mL of **70% ethanol**.

**Be careful not to touch the threads or the inside of the microtube container.**

- 2) With bird in hand and using forceps, grasp body feather at the base of the shaft and gently pull away from body. (We have been using the longer body feathers located below the wing along the side of the body. You want to take about 5 body feathers from each side of the body, and you want to take body feathers with the longest feather shafts possible – excluding retrices, primaries and secondaries)

**Be careful not to break the shaft of the feather off at the base leaving a portion of the shaft in the skin of the bird – this may lead to infection**

- 3) With feather still in forceps, clip bottom of shaft (2-4 mm – as much of the base below the feathers as possible) while holding over microtube so that base portion drops into ethanol mixture within tube.
- 4) Carefully seal microtube with screw cap.
- 5) Grab labeling machine, enter the following into machine:

**Date**  
**Bird band number**  
**Radio serial number (if applicable)**

- 6) Record the data above as well as **sex, age, weight and any other comments** on data sheets.
- 7) Put the bird back in its home.

**The above should be followed to the letter to ensure that contamination of the specimens does not occur.**

**The reason for the caution is that during PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) amplification of the DNA within the feather, contamination of the samples may be introduced through handling.**

**This screws everything up and the data collected will be inaccurate yielding results that are just as inaccurate**