



Hematology in birds and reptiles

We accept blood samples from birds and reptiles for hematology analysis. In most species, EDTA works well as an anticoagulant, but there are exceptions (see Table 1).

Table 1. Species where heparin is preferred as anticoagulant.
Animal Species

Bird	Crow
	Jay
	Raven
	Magpie
	Ostrich
	Crane
	Hornbills
	Some ducks
Reptiles	Turtles

The shelf life of hematological samples is worse in birds and reptiles than in mammals. We recommend that the samples are analyzed within 24 hours of sampling if you want a value for the total leukocyte count. In birds, a slightly falsely low leukocyte count can be seen after just 12 hours of storage. Always send a blood smear made from fresh blood. Blood smears are made when sampling from a drop of blood directly from the cannula (i.e. without anticoagulants) because some anticoagulants can cause the cells to stain worse. If possible, please also make a smear from the tube with anticoagulants.

Please keep the blood sample tube refrigerated until transport and, if possible, send with an ice pack for better durability, but be careful that the tube does not freeze. The smears should be stored at room temperature.

We do not have our own reference intervals for odd animal species but provide reference intervals from the literature. For some unusual species there are no published reference intervals.