

KEEL SCORE RATING GUIDE

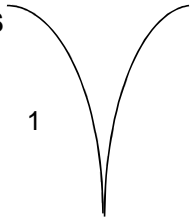
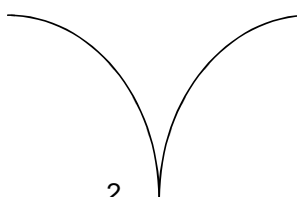

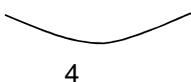
Linda Henry, SeaWorld San Diego

The guide is designed to provide a means for a more consistent assessment of a bird's palpated weight. The keel score ratings are listed below with their description and a sketch example of the degree of flesh. Sometimes a bird may seem to be between two scoring possibilities. In this case, a score of 1.5 or 2.5 may be appropriate

Where possible, always pair the assessed keel score with the gram weight of the bird. Keep in mind that what is a *normal* keel score rating will vary with the species. It is a subjective determination to be evaluated in the context of the overall health of the bird and the gram weight of the bird. If an increase in weight does not correspond with an increase in keel score, consider behavioral observations to determine if there is a health problem. Generally, keel score and weight are in agreement.

Factors that figure into weight vs keel score ratings include age of the bird, pinioning, amputation, degree of hydration, and, in flamingos, height, etc.

This technique was borrowed and adapted from a parrot center in Florida.

KEEL SCORE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
1	Emaciated, keeling severely and sharply	
2	Keeling, only small amount of muscle dipped to either side of keel.	
3	Keel palpable but muscle firm to either side.	
4	Muscle appears straight across over keel, keel palpable between muscle.	
5	Cleavage, keel not palpable, muscle mounded to either side of keel.	