



## ROUS Foundation for Capybara Veterinary Medicine in conjunction with Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine Capybara Necropsy Instructions

### **Introduction:**

The ROUS Foundation provides funds for certain veterinary expenses associated with the care of captive capybaras through services provided by Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine.

The goal of the ROUS Foundation is to improve the quality and duration of life for captive capybaras, including those kept as pets, in small zoos, or in major zoological parks. One of our first objectives is determining the life expectancy of captive capybaras. Once this is understood we can work toward extending it. To this end we provide free necropsies. This allows us to gather data on the age and condition of capybaras when they die, what the immediate cause of death is, and any complicating factors that may have contributed to the death. The Foundation supplies funds to cover the costs of capybara necropsies done at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine (TAMU), including the cost of shipping the deceased animal from within the United States and Canada. It is also possible for ashes of the deceased animal to be returned upon request.

### **Donations:**

Tax deductible donations can be made directly to TAMU at <http://vetmed.tamu.edu/giving/opportunities/rous>.

Direct donations to the Foundation can also be made using PayPal money transfers to [rousfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:rousfoundation@gmail.com). These donations are not tax deductible. Donations received through this method are generally used to cover the cost of cremations and to provide scales for capybara owners as part of our effort to determine normal growth rates for captive capybaras. You can learn more about the weight program at <http://rousfoundation.com/2018/05/the-rf-why-weight-program>.

### **Expenses:**

The cost of the gross necropsy and histopathology is completely covered by the ROUS Foundation. Liver profiles, and cremation costs are also covered.

The ROUS Foundation will reimburse the cost of shipping from within the United States and Canada. Note that you will have to pay the shipping cost, up front, and that the reimbursement process can take from 2-6 weeks. Shipping a 150 pound box can cost as much as \$1000.

## Shipping:

- It is imperative that the deceased animal be shipped **as quickly as possible**, preferably the day the animal died, using **overnight shipping** using either FedEx or UPS but NOT USPS. Check with your shipper to determine the time of the last truck out, which can be as early as 4:00 PM. It's no use packing your shipment if the last truck leaves for the airport before you are ready. UPS will usually allow you to pack your specimen in the lobby.
- The body should be kept refrigerated or on ice but **not frozen**, even during shipping. **Do not use dry ice.**
- Be aware that both FedEx and UPS have limits of 150 pounds on packages. If your animal weighs over 100 pounds, it is unlikely that you will be able to ship it due to the additional weight of ice needed to keep the body cold during shipping.
- You can purchase an appropriately sized box at the UPS or FedEx store for an animal weighing up to 85 pounds, depending on the type of insulation and the amount of ice required. You can also purchase plastic bags and tape. Make sure the body is securely wrapped and the box is reinforced with enough tape to prevent any damage during shipping.
- Ice must be purchased before you go to the shipping store. Depending upon the type of insulation used and the weight of the capybara, up to 40 lbs of ice may be needed. Bring extra in case you end up needing more than you expect. Ice blocks are preferred over cubed since these melt more slowly.

You must contact the ROUS Foundation or TAMU before the animal is shipped to ensure that the body will be picked up promptly at the TAMU central mail office and that someone will be available to do the necropsy as soon as the animal arrives. Note that there will be no one at the University on weekends.

**Shipments must arrive at TAMU on a normal non-holiday weekday.**

Contact one of the following (please attempt contact in the order shown):

- Melanie Typaldos, ROUS Foundation: (512) 751-6667
- Tatyana Guy, Research Associate: (281) 795-6899
- Dr. Sharman Hoppes: (979) 845-2351 (ask for Dr. Hoppes)
- Dr. Lana Fox: (979) 845-2351 (ask for Dr. Fox)

In addition, if possible please send an email to

[RousFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:RousFoundation@gmail.com)

And cc

[shoppes@cvm.tamu.edu](mailto:shoppes@cvm.tamu.edu)

[tvguy@cvm.tamu.edu](mailto:tvguy@cvm.tamu.edu)

- Address the package as follows (The clerk may need to override the automatic system zip code function of their automatic label generator, but this zip code is correct):

KEEP COLD – DO NOT FREEZE  
College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences  
Attn: Dr. Sharman Hoppes  
Building 508  
Texas A&M University  
4457 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-4457

In addition to the address, please print the following directly on all sides of the box:

**Specimen for Necropsy  
Keep Cold - Do Not Freeze - ROUS Foundation**

**Things to be aware of:**

- Use of this service grants the ROUS Foundation rights to the results of the necropsy and to use of those results in our research. The name of the owner and the capybara will not be public unless the owner grants permission.
- The necropsy report may not be available for up to two weeks
- The quality and nature of information obtained from the necropsy is dependent on the state of the deceased animal when the necropsy is performed. A frozen or decayed animal reduces the ability of the pathologists to determine cause of death, to study tissues and potentially to do blood tests. Nevertheless, these animals may still provide useful information. However, if the condition of the animal is too deteriorated, the pathologist may decline to perform a necropsy.
- Cremation services are available, but you must remember to ask for this custom service. Ashes will be shipped to you, at no cost.

**Veterinary History:**

Upon receipt of the animal, the pathologist will immediately need a recent veterinary history and conditions surrounding the death.

After you have provided a working history, please complete a veterinary history form regarding this animal. This information provides valuable insight into the cause and course of disease and what environmental factors may have contributed to the death. This should be done within a few days of shipping. The form for this information is available at [http://rousfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/ROUSFoundationHistory\\_01.pdf](http://rousfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/ROUSFoundationHistory_01.pdf)