Center for Biomedical Research / IACUC
Standard Operating Procedure - Guidelines

Social Housing

Pair or group housing of social animals will be considered the default method of housing unless otherwise justified based on social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior, veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being, or scientific necessity approved by the UND IACUC.

Definition of “Social Animal” – within the context of use at the University of North Dakota, the following species are defined as being potentially social: rodents and songbirds. Social animals will be housed in unisex compatible pairs or groups, rather than individually, unless a single housing exception has been approved in the relevant protocol or social housing poses an undue risk to the animals in question as determined by the UND Attending Veterinarian.

If the protocol driven need for single housing is necessary only for a portion of the study, the animals should be socially housed before and after that time.

Single housing of social animals post-operatively will be the norm and does not need specific exception approval in the relevant protocol. Single housing must be for the minimum amount of time post-operatively necessary for recovery and/or healing, as determined upon advice and oversight of the attending veterinarian.

When social animals must be housed singly, con-specifics will be housed in visual, olfactory, and/or tactile range whenever possible. When social animals must be housed singly, environmental and/or food enrichment, exercise/release into larger enclosures, and/or human interaction shall be provided unless scientifically contraindicated.

When animals are left singly housed due to attrition of cage mates on study, consideration should be given to re-housing with other con-specifics when possible and with consideration given to the expected duration of the study.

References: Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition, Page 64
https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals.pdf