



Companion — flock user guide

This module changes **what a fleet of BirdDog Play NDI/SRT decoders is playing**, from one surface, through **flock**.

The [README](#) covers installing the module. This is how to build a surface with it, and what a group button actually does to the room.

Before you rely on this: a group action writes to **real hardware, many boxes at a time**. Each one re-routes what a physical decoder is putting on its HDMI output — potentially a screen someone is watching. There is no confirmation step. Rehearse the page.

This module was built with AI assistance, directed and reviewed by a human author.

Connecting

flock's web server, port **8080** by default. Leave the password blank unless flock was started with `[web].admin_password`.

flock's brute-force lockout is process-wide, not per client. Repeated wrong attempts from Companion lock the web UI out too — so a mistyped password here takes away the tool you would use to investigate.

Set the poll interval deliberately

There are **two very different kinds of read** behind this module, and only one of them is free:

	Comes from	Cost
Which decoders exist, and their tags	flock's WebSocket, pushed on change	free
Online, resolution, bitrate, what it is playing	one HTTP request from flock to every decoder	not free

That is why the status poll defaults to something slow enough to leave a fleet alone rather than something that feels responsive.

- **5 s** suits a monitoring page.
- **0** turns polling off entirely. Actions still work, and each one refreshes once on its own — which is the right setting for a surface that fires takes rather than watches status.

A fast interval means constant traffic to real decoders, all day.

Group takes are the point

flock exists to change many decoders at once. A group action writes to **every decoder carrying that tag**.

The tag dropdown shows the membership count. Check it before firing.

And use the right feedback: **"Every decoder with a tag is playing the same source"**, not the per-decoder one, on group buttons. A take that reached three of four decoders should not look like a success — that partial landing is the failure worth a light of its own, and it is why the generated group preset uses the all-members feedback.

Per-decoder failures inside a group action are logged individually rather than collapsing into one "failed", so the log tells you *which* box did not take it.

"Online but no picture"

This is the state an operator most wants a light for, and the one that is invisible from "is it online": **the box is up, answering, and no video is arriving**.

It has its own feedback, and the generated per-decoder preset shows it **in red over the online green** — so a decoder that is technically fine and showing nothing does not read as healthy.

Offline means offline

Unlike the other modules in this fleet, **a decoder that stops answering is marked offline rather than keeping its last known value**. Here that is real information about a real box: a decoder showing green while unplugged is worse than useless.

flock is connected covers the different case, where the module knows nothing at all. Both belong on the page, because they send you to different places.

NDI source names are free text

The real hardware has no discovered-source picker for that field, so the source name is typed rather than chosen.

Log the NDI sources flock can see is the lookup aid — run it, read the log, copy the name. It does not feed a dropdown, and cannot.

Building a surface that fails safe

1. **Group buttons with the all-members feedback**, never the per-decoder one.
2. **Membership counts checked** before a show, from the tag dropdown.
3. **Online-but-no-picture** on every per-decoder tile.
4. **flock is connected** somewhere visible, so a dead module does not read as a healthy fleet.
5. **Poll interval at 0** on a takes-only surface, 5 s on a monitoring wall — not faster.

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Cause
A group button went green but one screen is wrong	The per-decoder feedback is on the button. Use the all-members one.
Status never updates	Polling is off (interval 0). Actions still refresh once each; add <i>Refresh status now</i> .
Constant traffic to the decoders	The poll interval is too fast. Each poll hits every box.
A decoder shows online with a black screen	That is the online-but-no-picture state — add its feedback.
The web UI locked me out after using Companion	The lockout is process-wide. Fix the password in the connection config.
Source name does nothing	It is free text and must match exactly. Run <i>Log the NDI sources flock can see</i> .

See also

- [README](#) — installing, and the full action/feedback/variable list
- `companion/HELP.md` — the same material, in Companion's help panel