

# Sandhill Veterinary Services

Veterinary Care for Game Birds, Commercial Poultry and Pigeons



## AUGUST 2104

### SUBMISSION REVIEW

A 'submission' is a single bird or distinct batch of birds of the same age or type. These figures do not include faeces samples submitted for coccidial oocysts counts and worm egg counts.

Total Game Birds Examined	317	Total Number of Submissions	100
---------------------------	-----	-----------------------------	-----

#### PHEASANTS

#### PARTRIDGES

Age	Number of submissions	Age	Number of submissions
1 – 7do	0	1 – 7do	0
8 – 14do	0	8 – 14do	0
2 – 4wo	7	2 – 5wo	2
4 – 7wo	35	5 – 7wo	4
7wo +	31	7wo +	21
Adults	0	Adults	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>27</b>

#### PHEASANTS:

**2-4 week old Pheasants:** The most common finding in birds in this age group in August was coccidiosis affecting both the intestines and the caecae. Two of the seven submissions had generalized bacterial infections – in both cases due to *E.coli* bacteria. Sensitivity testing of the isolates showed wide variations in the antibiotics to which these isolated bacteria were sensitive.



*E.coli* bacteria growing on a culture plate.

**4-7 week old Pheasants:** About 77% of birds seen in this age group had enteritis and 55% of the birds seen had significant levels of Intestinal or Caecal Spironucleosis (Hexamita / Trichomonads). Levels of coccidiosis were lower than in July with less than 30% of submissions in this age group having clinical signs of the disease in August.

Two cases of Mycoplasmosis were seen in five week old birds – in one of these the birds had had the infection for some time as there was purulent material in the sinuses. Gizzard impactions were a relatively frequent finding with about one in five submissions having at least one bird with the condition. The impactions were due primarily to fibrous grass and bedding material.

**7+ week old Pheasants:** Most of the birds in this age group were birds that had been released and this influenced some of the conditions seen. In just over 10% of cases gape worms were identified and in 15% of cases intestinal worms were present. However bacterial enteritis was the most common finding with levels of Spironucleosis at just under 30% being lower than in the younger birds. The underlying cause of enteritis in many cases was the presence of smaller birds that were eating wild seeds, losing condition and therefore being more prone to disease especially when the nights turned chilly.



In some cases the reason for the birds choosing to eat wild seeds was the presence of aerial predators so that they preferred to remain in cover.

*Buzzard*

#### PARTRIDGES:

**2-5 week old Partridges:** Both batches of partridges in this age group had enteritis with Intestinal Spironucleosis (Hexamita) present.

**5-7 week old Partridges:** All the birds seen in this age group had coccidiosis – in 75% the primary infection was in the caecae and in the remaining 25% the primary infection was in the intestines.

**7+ week old Partridges:** Necrotic or Ulcerative Enteritis was the most common cause of sudden mortality with birds in good bodily condition in the older partridges. In all cases the birds were still in the rearing pens.

Gape worms were present in 15% of cases and intestinal worms were seen slightly more frequently in just under 20% of submissions. Clinical coccidiosis was seen in about 50% of submissions.



**Gape worm – *Syngamus trachea***

**GROUSE:** Following the start of shooting we continued to see young grouse which had failed to thrive and a variety of conditions were identified.

Post mortem examinations and worm counts have not yet shown birds with high levels of *Trichostrongylus* worms and worm egg counts have been correspondingly low. Individual birds with high coccidial oocyst counts have been identified and in general these have been smaller birds suggesting that the levels of coccidiosis may be having a clinical effect.

In addition we had a number of birds (or heads) submitted to check for Cryptosporidiosis. Positive stained smears have identified clinical cases. One bird with avian pox and severe facial lesions was also seen. This bird also had a heavy louse infestation.



**Grouse head with pox lesions.**

**Louse eggs on grouse feathers**



Richard Byas M.R.C.V.S. September 2014

Copies of this report and previous Disease Surveillance Reports can be found on the practice website.

