

# Sandhill Veterinary Services

Veterinary Care for Game Birds, Commercial Poultry and Pigeons



**JULY 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	670	Total Number of Submissions	202
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### PHEASANTS

### PARTRIDGES

Age	Number of submissions		Age	Number of submissions
1 – 7do	0		1 – 7do	0
8 – 14do	0		8 – 14do	19
2 – 4wo	5		2 – 5wo	65
4 – 7wo	14		5 – 7wo	51
7wo +	21		7wo +	25
Adults	0		Adults	2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>40</b>		<b>Total:</b>	<b>162</b>

### PHEASANTS:

**8-14 day old Pheasant Chicks:** Although enteritis was the most common finding in birds seen in this age group there were a substantial number of birds showing signs of generalized bacterial infections. These were primarily due to E.coli infections but both Salmonella typhimurium and Salmonella indiana were isolated from individual batches of chicks. Clinical coccidiosis was seen in one batch of chicks at just 13 days old. These birds had caecal cores present but culture for Salmonella in these chicks was negative.

**2-7 week old Pheasants:** Cases of Mycoplasmosis from the same parent flock on the same game farm reported in the May and June are now known to have affected at least eight flocks of rearing birds under the care of four veterinary practices. Work is now being done at a number of specialist laboratories to try to further understand the causal organism and to try to identify its origin. Quite independently, after many reported cases of Mycoplasmosis in breeding birds earlier in the year, we have seen four cases of Mycoplasmosis in birds from 3 weeks old to 6 weeks old. In most cases these have responded better to medication than the problem flocks detailed above.



**Aspergillus lesions in a pheasant's lungs**

We have also seen three cases of Aspergillosis in birds in the same age group. In all cases the disease was believed to have originated in contaminated bedding and not to have originated at the hatchery.

One unusual feature of birds this year has been the relatively large number of pheasant submissions showing generalized bacteria infections in birds between two and five weeks old. In this age group the causal organism has been primarily E.coli and in many cases. Sensitivity testing of the isolates showed wide variations in the antibiotics to which the isolated bacteria were sensitive.

Bacterial enteritis was the most common finding in birds in this age group with about 50% also having Intestinal Spironucleosis (Hexamita) present. In birds over three weeks old 24% had clinically significant levels of coccidiosis.

**7+ week old Pheasants:** Birds in this age group were primarily birds that had been released. Enteritis with Intestinal Spironucleosis (Hexamita) present was the most common finding. In many cases the birds were submitted because, despite the majority of birds appearing healthy, a number of smaller birds were present that were losing condition. In many of these birds it was found that their main dietary intake had been cleaver seeds which have poor nutritional value. Suitable medication, encouraging the better birds to leave the pen to allow the poorer birds better access to the food and dealing with any other identified stresses has largely been effective in dealing with these problems.



**Cleavers**

## PARTRIDGES:

**2-4 week old Partridges:** Coccidiosis was the most common diagnosis in birds in this age range with the youngest birds seen with clinical coccidiosis being only 21 days old.

**4-7 week old Partridges:** Coccidiosis was the most significant findings in birds in this age group. Caecal cores related to coccidiosis were present in just two cases. About 50% of submissions had birds with bacterial enteritis but overall motile protozoa were only identified in just over 20% of cases.

**7+ week old Partridges:** In a third of cases of partridges seen in this age group the primary cause of death was Necrotic or Ulcerative Enteritis. It was seen in birds from eight weeks old to sixteen weeks old. In most cases it was associated with low levels of coccidial oocysts being present. The frequency of clinical coccidiosis declined as bird age increased. Caecal Spirochaete Bacteria were identified in only 16% of cases.



*Ulcerative Enteritis*

**GROUSE:** We continue to see young grouse from a number of moors which have failed to thrive but as last month no one single condition has been identified in all the birds.

The picture of a common history of weak birds on numerous moors which are not connected with a variety of clinical conditions on examination suggests a possible nutritional problem – either in the hen birds being short of nutrients with the later eggs producing chicks that are less viable or a problem in the chick nutrition with the weaker chicks not competing with their stronger companions. It has been suggested by one keeper that it may be due to a late frost that damaged the growing shoots of the heather on the lower areas of the moors as it has been observed that the young birds at higher altitudes are not suffering from these problems.



**DUCKS:** We have seen one case of 8-9 week old ducks that were dying due to massive leech infestations.



The birds were on a pond and it was reported that there were large numbers of leeches at one end of the pond where there was a good growth of pond weed. The leeches were attaching to the feather free areas of the head – around the eyes and in the nostrils in such numbers that the ducks could not see and eventually could not breath.

*Leeches affecting mallard duck*