

Sandhill Veterinary Services

Veterinary Care for Game Birds, Commercial Poultry and Pigeons



JUNE 2015

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	759	Total Number of Submissions	195 Incl 1 x duck 2 x grey part.
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PHEASANTS

PARTRIDGES

Age	Number of submissions	Age	Number of submissions
1 – 7do	44	1 – 7do	3
8 – 14do	19	8 – 14do	2
2 – 4wo	26	2 – 5wo	8
4 – 7wo	57	5 – 7wo	18
7wo +	7	7wo +	8
Adults	0	Adults	0
TOTAL:	153	Total:	39

PHEASANTS:

0-7 day old Pheasant Chicks: The majority of chicks seen up to five days old had yolk sac infections with E.coli being the primary bacterium isolated. The isolates showed a wide range of sensitivities to antibiotics with no single antibiotic being suitable for all the cases seen. Many batches of chicks submitted for examination were of poor quality with some significantly undersized chicks being present. In chicks over 5do the primary finding was bacterial enteritis – in some cases this was related to the stress of variable weather conditions and in others appeared to be related to chick quality. In two cases vent pecking started in birds with enteritis.

8-14 day old Pheasant Chicks: Enteritis was the most common finding in birds seen in this age group but in about 20% of cases an increase in mortality was due to a generalized E.coli infection. One case of generalized infection in 14do birds was due to Salmonella typhimurium.



We had no positive tests for Rotavirus infection in June. Coccidial oocysts were detected in birds as young as 14do but they were not at levels to suggest they were causing clinical disease.

Pheasant chick with severe caecal damage due to Salmonellosis.

2-4 week old Pheasant Chicks: The majority of clinical cases seen in this age group had enteritis although clinical coccidiosis was detected in 46% of submissions compared with only about half this level last year confirming our impression that levels of clinical coccidiosis in pheasants have been particularly high this year. The youngest pheasants with clinical coccidiosis were only 17 days old. The earliest identification of Spironucleosis (Hexamita) was on 5th June and the youngest birds in which it was identified were just 17 days old.

4+ week old Pheasant Chicks: The very variable weather conditions were in many cases blamed for a significant amount of disease in birds over 4 weeks old with bacterial enteritis being commonly seen together with Spironucleosis (Hexamita) which was seen in 44% of cases of enteritis and was seen more commonly as the month progressed. The rate at which coccidiosis was seen in these older chicks declined to just over 31% compared with 46% in chicks in the 2-4wo age group. Five cases of Sinusitis / Conjunctivitis suggestive of Mycoplasmosis were seen in birds in this age group.

Overall more pheasant submissions have been received than in the corresponding period last year. This increase in problems probably reflects both difficult weather conditions for rearing birds in many parts of the country and poorer chick quality which was seen earlier in the season. Both these may also have resulted in a poorer response of birds to treatment.

PARTRIDGES:

0-2 week old Partridge Chicks: The few problems seen in very young chicks related to poor chick quality with Yolk Sac Infections, generalized bacterial infections and starve outs being the primary findings. One case of Mycoplasmosis was seen in a batch of 14do chicks.

2-5 week old Partridges: Coccidiosis was seen in birds as young as 4wo with lesions causing severe damage to the caecal linings in 2/3 cases of clinical coccidiosis. No Salmonellae were isolated from these birds. Gapeworm infection was seen in one batch of 4wo birds.

2-5 week old Partridges: Coccidiosis and associated conditions were the most common finding in birds of this age. One batch of 40 do birds had Blackhead type lesions (protozoal hepatitis) and necrotic enteritis with the causal organism being suggested as Tetratrichomonas gallinarum by AHPA Lasswade.



Partridge liver showing sign of protozoal hepatitis

An outbreak of generalized E.coli infection causing lesions around the heart and livers was seen in one batch of 42 do birds and a further case of Mycoplasmosis was seen in a separate batch of 42 do birds

5 week old + Partridges: Disease in birds over 5 weeks old was nearly all due to coccidiosis with underlying enteritis in some cases. No cases of Spironucleosis (Hexamita) were seen in partridges in June.

Overall fewer partridge submissions were received this year than in June 2014.

GROUSE: Submissions of young grouse have been low over this summer possibly reflecting the low number of young birds on many moors due to poor weather and lack of food for the chicks at a critical time in their development. Both high levels of worms and Cryptosporidiosis were diagnosed in chicks that were submitted. No cases of clinical coccidiosis have so far been detected in grouse this year.