

## 15 Pigeon Diseases

Diseases list:

### **Canker - Trichomoniasis****Canker**

**Cause** - This is the most common pigeon disease. It's caused by a microscopic protozoan which is flagellated and, therefore, mobile. It can be transmitted from one bird to another usually through the drinking water, and parent birds can infect their young through feeding.

**Symptoms** - Infected birds show a definite reduction in activity, ruffled feathers, loss of weight, increased water intake, and diarrhea. Cheesy yellowish deposits can often be observed in the mouth or throat. In advanced stages, a stringy mucous and putrid odor can be detected in the mouth. Young birds are most susceptible.

**Prevention** - Control stress with half dosage of Improver and AntiFungal, this will control the stress to 0 in the birds.

Maintain regular feed and withering schedules, sanitize drinkers regularly, isolate and observe any newly acquired birds for several weeks, and administer an anti-canker drug or Improver on a regular basis throughout the year. Veterinary recommendations vary from once every three months to once a month. This will depend upon incidence and susceptibility in your own flock.

### **Coccidiosis**

**Cause** - This highly infection and very common disease is caused is caused by a protozoan that infects the intestines of our birds. It usually present to some degree in all pigeons, but most adult birds have developed enough immunity to the disease to remain healthy. Most often infected are young pigeons or birds that have been subjected to severe stress (i.e., racing, showing, lack of feed/water, or relocation). Adult birds may become infected from drinking unclean water or from being in contact with moist droppings.

**Symptoms** - Infected birds have little or no desire to eat or drink, will remain puffed up on perches, lack any desire to move and often close their eyes. Droppings are usually very loose, greenish in color and may become very watery. Loss of weight occurs, and death can occur in young birds.

**Prevention** - Use Improver and AntiFungal, keep lofts dry and sanitary. Do not allow feed to come into contact with droppings, and regularly disinfect drinkers. Do not allow birds to drink from gutters or mud puddles, and keep feed and water free from contact with rodents. Always isolate new birds as described earlier, as they are a primary target for the spread of coccidiosis. Returning race birds should be given a preventive treatment shortly after their return, especially if out over night. Baskets should be disinfected weekly.

## **E. coli or Collibacillosis**

**Cause** - This disease, which is now thought to be more prevalent in pigeons than once suspected, is caused by gram negative bacteria's which can invade our lofts through infected dust particles, rodent droppings, and through infected pigeon droppings coming into contact with eggs in the nest. Infected adult pigeons will emit the bacteria throughout a pigeon loft.

**Symptoms** - Since the E. coli bacteria can manifest themselves in any part of the pigeon's body, symptoms can be diverse. Most often young will die in the nest, adult birds will become listless and lose weight, and their droppings will become loose, mucous, and greenish-yellow in appearance. Sometimes the droppings will have a foul odor. Occasionally some birds may have nasal discharges and respiratory problems associated with this disease.

**Prevention** - Maintaining good loft hygiene and keeping rodents away from feed and water are very important. Also keeping dust and ammonia levels down will help to control any outbreaks.

**General Antibiotics** - Any fancier would be well advised to have a good general antibiotic in his medicine chest. They can be useful as "first choice" drugs if and when problems occur. General antibiotics are effective against a broad range of both gram positive and negative bacteria. But excessive use of them can really damage the microflora of the bird, therefore most veterinarians suggest a use of Improver as it is called 'green antibiotic' and will have the same effect that any antibiotic, but will leave the good bacteria and keep the balance of the pigeon intact.

## **One-Eye Colds**

**Cause** - Often confused with the onset of mycoplasmosis, one - eye colds are usually associated with a peck in the eye or some other type of physical injury affecting the eye. One-eye colds can also be caused by improper ventilation, drafts or dampness in the loft.

**Symptoms** - A watery or mucous discharge in only one eye is usually the symptom most commonly noticed, but occasionally both eyes will have watery appearances. Sometimes one eye can become

completely shut, depending upon the degree of infection.

**Prevention** - Maintaining proper ventilation and not allowing overcrowded conditions to manifest themselves in our lofts will go a long way in preventing one-eye colds. It is also considered good loft hygiene to keep dust levels to a minimum, as many types of infectious bacteria are carried by dust particles.

### **Paratyphoid - Salmonellosis**

**Cause** - This very common and quite widespread is caused by a gram-negative bacterium which is flagellated, therefore mobile. It can be brought into a loft either through introduction of infected pigeons, by rodents, through inhalation of infected dust, on the soles of fanciers shoes, by roaches, or through contact with wild pigeons. Often an adult bird that has overcome the disease remains a carrier and continues to produce infected droppings.

**Symptoms** - Salmonella flagellates can be found throughout the body in severely infected birds. Thus, a variety of symptoms is possible. Most adult birds will show rapid weight loss, along with somewhat loose, greenish droppings. Some birds may develop swelling in the leg joints or feet, or may develop wing boils. Other birds may have the "twisted neck" syndrome commonly associated with PMV. Baby birds will often show labored breathing or die in the nest before the second week after hatching. Another symptom young dying in the egg.

**Prevention** - Loft hygiene is critical, because salmonella flagellates can live in the droppings for some time. But once AntiFungal and Improver are given in the drinking water of the pigeons, the droppings will stop being infected with salmonella. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of lofts, feeders and drinkers is imperative. Minimizing contact with rodents, roaches and wild birds, quarantining newly acquired birds, and maintaining an acid pH level below 4.0 thanks to Improver in our lofts are all helpful steps in keeping this disease under control. Several veterinarians have recommended the use of Nolvasan disinfectant together with Improver at one teaspoon per gallon (4.5 liters) of drinking water regularly to help maintain an acidic environment in the droppings. Regular use of the Improver against salmonella has proven to be especially effective.

### **Pigeon Pox**

**Cause and Symptoms**- Pigeon pox is caused by a virus that is generally carried by mosquitoes and other biting insects. When a nonresistant pigeon is bitten by a carrier parasite, the virus enters the bloodstream of the bird, and within five to seven days, small whitish wart-like lesions appear on the head, feet legs and beak areas. These deposits can grow to become large yellowish bumps which, if

removed, may ooze blood. In time, these lesions will dry and fall off, so it is our advice to leave them alone.

**Prevention** - Other than using the pigeon pox vaccines, no remedy is acceptable. Improver and AntiFungal can only reduce the virus to his minimum and cure up to 75% of the time. Controlling the mosquito and fly populations in and around one's loft may be helpful, but the only sure way to prevent pox is to vaccinate.

### **PMV - Paramyxovirus**

**Cause and Symptoms** - Paramyxovirus or PMV-1 is a viral infection unique to pigeons and is extremely contagious, especially in the racing sport where hundreds or thousands of birds are mixed and confined prior to release. Direct contact or indirect contact through contaminated feed, water or litter can spread the disease. Symptoms include extremely loose, watery droppings, lack of appetite, ruffled feathers poor coordination, and sometimes paralysis of wings and legs. In advanced stages, birds will show "twisted neck" symptoms and many birds will die.

**Prevention** - Currently in the U.S and Europe, the only effective means of protection is by vaccination with the Maine Biological oil-adjuvant PMV-1 vaccine. Many fanciers are using the LaSota vaccine, thinking that they are protecting their birds, but challenge tests using LaSota vaccine was not effective in producing antibodies for the pigeon PMV-1 virus. While the LaSota vaccine was effective for short duration protection for Newcastle's disease, this disease is almost non-existent in pigeons and should be differentiated from PMV-1.

### **Adeno Virus**

**Cause and Symptoms** - Only birds whose immune systems are suppressed are vulnerable to this disease. There are two types of Adeno Virus that infect pigeons. Type 1 affects young pigeons primarily and causes vomiting and diarrhea, from which many birds recover. Type 2 is contracted by older pigeons and strikes the liver, with most affected birds dying within 24 hours. Some birds display a fluid yellow diarrhea and vomiting before death. But the main sign is sudden death, occurring within 24 hours of the onset. None of the affected birds live longer than 48 hours. E. coli often accompanies Type 1 ( which is associated with young pigeons ) and complicates the infection, making the diarrhea and vomiting more severe and adding respiratory symptoms. This Type 1 Adeno Virus/E. coli sometimes successfully treated with antibiotics. Cases that are the best managed are those in which the loft environment is good and in which all secondary diseases like canker and coccidiosis are treated so that birds are best able to fight the virus.

**Prevention** - Adeno virus is always present in a young bird, and it erupts when the immune system or fails. It is important to wait until the 12-th week for any type of vaccination. There is currently no vaccine that is proven to be effective against Adeno Virus. It's also important to keep stress in the loft at a minimum with AntiFungal and Improver and to boost pigeons' general health with vitamin supplements that are already included in Pigeon Vitality products, etc.

## **Circo Virus**

**Cause and Symptoms** - Because of the way this disease damages the immune system and seems to invite secondary infection, Circo Virus is sometimes called pigeon AIDS. Circo Virus damages the lymphocytes in the blood, which are closely associated with the immune system. With damaged lymphocytes, the pigeons become susceptible to secondary infections with other viruses, parasites and bacteria. Pigeons infected with Circo Virus can also have continuing problems with diseases like respiratory infections, chlamydia, or canker due to the fact that they cannot form natural immunities to them. Most often, Circo Virus kills very young pigeons and strikes older youngsters that have already molted three or four flights. Birds with Circo Virus have a yellowish discharge dried on the beak, and they are very reluctant to move, thin and dehydrated, and have no appetite and difficulty breathing. But it is extremely hard to diagnose Circo Virus by looking at the birds. The signs that can be observed are typically caused by many different types of secondary infections.

**Prevention** - Use of improver and AntiFungal while keeping the disease out of the loft by not introducing birds from lofts known to have health problems. Stray youngsters should be immediately removed if they do not look well, and try to identify carrier stock birds by re-pairing those whose offspring seem weak or die. If the virus comes into your loft, minimize its spread by taking sick birds out immediately and isolating them while giving them full doses of Improver, paying attention to on-going hygiene. Good care, given day to day, places your pigeons in the best situation to resist infection, and gives those that become infected the best chances of recovery. The main defense against Circo Virus is to identify and treat secondary infections, allowing the birds to live long enough for immune system to repair itself. Probiotics help well birds resist the disease by maintaining a healthy bowel population of bacteria.

## **Pigeon Malaria**

**Cause** - This fairly common pigeon disease is caused by a protozoan that attacks the red blood cells of our birds. It is primarily carried by the pigeon fly, which acts as the intermediate host. Random tests of pigeon flocks have shown as much as a 30% malaria rate.

**Symptoms** - Symptoms are vague. Except for some loss of gloss in plumage and reduced

performance in racing events, there are no readily visible symptoms.

**Prevention** - Since the pigeon fly is the primary carrier of this disease, it is imperative that these flies be controlled. It's important to quarantine newly acquired birds, dust or dip birds after they have mingled with others, and eliminate contact with wild pigeons, because curing this disease is very difficult.

## **Respiratory infections - Mycoplasmosis & Ornithosis**

**Cause** - These diseases all fall into the infectious bacterial category.

**Coryza** is actually the descriptive term used to identify the thick mucous discharges usually associated with both Mycoplasmosis catarrh and Ornithosis. The bacteria (termed Chlamydia in the case of Ornithosis) lodge in the upper respiratory tract and can be extremely hard to completely eradicate. Often, infected birds never completely recover. Although their external symptoms may disappear, they can remain carriers for life.

**Symptoms** - The classic symptoms of respiratory infections include mucous in the throat, open beak and heavy breathing, rasping or gurgling while breathing, watery discharge from eyes, sometimes associated with swelling in the eye area. Other symptoms include discharge from the nasal area and occasionally air sac swelling or crop swelling as torn air sacs trap air under the skin. As is usually the case with pigeons, other diseases can quickly manifest themselves when birds are in distress, so other symptoms can occur, such as loose, greenish droppings and loss of weight. Most often the only noticeable difference in our birds will be their unwillingness to fly or their complete failure in the racing events. Respiratory infections are the most damning to racing fanciers because many populations are carriers of the disease in one form or another, and symptoms are hard to identify. But results will definitely be diminished.

**Prevention** - The most important aspects in controlling respiratory infections are adequate ventilation without drafts, keeping dust and ammonia levels low (which means keeping droppings from accumulating) and controlling dampness and overcrowding. Since tests have indicated that in some areas as much as 70% of the wild pigeon population is either infected with or carries respiratory disease, it would be wise to limit contact with feral birds. Since sporadic drug treatment at inadequate levels can cause rapid resistance to medication, always treat with effective drugs for the recommended length of time. Proper quarantining of new birds is also a must.

## **Sour Crop - Candida, Thrush**

**Cause** - This very common disease is caused by a fungus infection of the digestive tract. It is often

associated with excessive use of antibiotics.

**Symptoms** - Infected birds become listless, won't eat, lose weight, develop a water-filled crop and vomit often. This vomit often has a very putrid odor. Sometimes, in lesser cases, thrush will show itself as just small whitish spots in the throat, which causes confusion with canker. Another much less noticed symptoms, usually found only in adult birds, is feather pulling.

**Prevention** - Avoid overcrowding, maintain a sanitary loft, and most importantly, do not medicate indiscriminately, use Improver to regulate naturally the immune system of the pigeons.

## **Worm Diseases**

**Cause** - The most common worms found in pigeons today are roundworms hair worms, stomach wall worms, gapeworms, stromglylids and tapeworms.

**Symptoms** - The symptoms vary with the type of infestation, and conceivably pigeons can live with slight infestations and show no ill effects. Severe infestations generally cause droopiness, loss of weight and some diarrhea. Gapeworms can cause breathing problems. The best way to determine if a worm problem exists is to have the droppings checked.

**Prevention** - Clean, sanitary lofts are most beneficial to keeping worms in check, but since pigeons often mingle with many hundreds of other birds, a bird can become infested through ingestion of worm eggs from the basket or through contact with stray pigeons. Therefore, it is advisable to develop a preventative worming program in which all birds are wormed at least twice a year.

## **External Parasites**

The most common external parasites that pester our birds are feather lice, red mites, pigeon flies, and mosquitoes. Since parasites like these can occur in almost any climate, they must be accounted for when planning a loft strategy. Feather lice chew holes into the flights or cause other types of visible damage to the feathers, which can affect a show or racing pigeon's performance. The common red mite can be a real problem in some lofts if it becomes established. It commonly hides somewhere in the loft during the day, and at night comes out from its hiding place to bite and feed on the blood of our birds. Besides being a nuisance and not allowing the flock to rest properly, they can help to spread an assortment of diseases. The pigeon fly is probably the most dangerous parasite that can attack our birds. It lives most of its life on our pigeons, leaving only to lay its eggs somewhere in the loft. Pigeon flies bite the birds often, and besides causing considerable discomfort, they can be a major cause of pigeon malaria. Mosquitoes would have to be considered the next worst

*parasite, simply because they are found in almost all climates. They are the most common carrier pigeon pox virus. There are numerous precautions we can take within our lofts to help control external parasites. In the case of lice, pigeon flies, and even mites, this mostly involves controlling their numbers by quarantining any new birds, and dipping or dusting our birds with pesticides. By keeping our lofts clean, we can eliminate many of the places where mites and flies can hide their eggs.*

## **Diarrhea**

*Sometimes our birds develop diarrhea, often just after medication treatments or high stress, so we wonder how they could be sick when we have just treated them. Often, the birds aren't actually sick, but they do have the loose droppings of sick birds because of the chemical imbalance created by the loss of the lactobacillus bacteria or "friendly bacteria" which inhabit our pigeon's gut and help the digestive process.*

*By using AntiFungal together with Improver you will reduce the stress dramatically and the good bacterias will stay protected in the pigeons which will keep the microflora perfectly in shape.*

*The guts and digestive process will act normal naturally.*