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## TRICHOMONIASIS

### Background

Avian trichomoniasis is caused by a single celled protozoan, *Trichomonas gallinae*, and is a common parasite of doves and pigeons. Other birds such as domestic and wild turkeys, chickens, and raptors (e.g., hawks and eagles) may also become infected. In doves and pigeons, the parasite is generally confined to young birds. Parasites are transmitted from adults to young in the pigeon milk produced in the crop of the adult. The parasite can also be transmitted through feed when infected birds regurgitate contaminated food and orally at birdfeeders and waterers. Birds of prey can become infected by feeding on infected birds.

Infected birds experience weight loss, appear listless, excessive salivation, difficulty eating and drinking, difficulty closing mouth, and stand grouped together. Yellowish lesions may be seen around the beak or eyes of mourning doves and the face may appear “puffy.” However, 80-90% of adult pigeons carry the parasite but show no clinical signs of illness.

### Management

Doves and pigeons should be kept from congregating in large groups, particularly at food and water sources. Feeders, water dishes, platforms, and other surfaces should be decontaminated regularly with a 10% bleach solution (9 parts water: 1 part bleach). Avoid overfeeding birds. If you feed birds, put a modest amount of seed out every other day so that it is all gone before the next feeding.

*Trichomonas gallinae* has never been reported to infect humans, and is currently of no public health significance.

### Reporting

To report dead wildlife, please call the Wildlife Disease Hotline at 877-972-8426. Wildlife health personnel will respond Monday through Friday during normal business hours. You can leave a message if it is before or after business hours. Fresh samples are required for testing. Recently dead birds may be collected by wearing gloves, double bagged, and frozen. If you have a wildlife related emergency, please call our 24 hour dispatch center at (623) 236-7201. If the animal you are calling about has been shot and you are reporting possible illegal activity, call Operation Game Thief 800-352-0700.

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