

1975 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON DISEASES OF WILD AND PET BIRDS

Diseases of wild and pet birds continue to be a major problem involving pet birds, migratory birds, and zoo birds with occasional extensions to the domestic poultry industry. During 1974-75, outbreaks of fowl cholera and duck virus enteritis have occurred in wild and captive birds.

Serious losses from avian cholera occurred in wild coots at the Back Bay National Refuge of Virginia and in ducks, geese, and crows along the Platte River in Nebraska this spring. Control measures were instituted at the Back Bay Refuge. Preliminary reports of VVND have not been confirmed by subsequent studies. Examination of coot sera from Florida, Virginia, Maryland, Texas, and California also has not detected any antibodies of VVND in randomly selected serum collections.

DVE caused losses of waterfowl in two zoologic parks (Washington, D. C. and San Francisco). The outbreak in San Francisco involved a flock which had a prior outbreak in 1972. All exposed ducks in this collection were destroyed following the current outbreak. The outbreak at the Washington, D. C., zoo resulted in a loss of 40 ducks. A special vaccine was utilized for control of the Washington, D. C., outbreak. DVE was also isolated from captive ducks and swans from several areas in New York State.

Studies conducted by Yuill and Ossa of the University of Wisconsin demonstrated that ducks which had recovered from DVE were capable of transmitting the virus to susceptible ducks.

Representatives of the U. S. Department of Interior and the U. S. Department of Agriculture are developing an interagency agreement to outline

their responsibilities in the handling of various disease outbreaks in wild birds which might pose a threat to domestic poultry. The agreement will identify the responsibility of each department for disease investigation and control of outbreaks.

The U. S. Department of Interior has established a new National Fish and Wildlife Health Laboratory at Madison, Wisconsin. The director of the laboratory is Dr. Milton Friend. The address of the laboratory is National Fish and Wildlife Health Laboratory, Stock Pavilion, University of Wisconsin, 1675 Linden Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. The diagnostic unit of the laboratory plans to be in operation by early fall.

A paper "Exotic Birds - Can We Afford Them" was presented by L. E. Hanson at the Western Poultry Conference held at Davis, California, in March. The paper identified problems of disease and ecologic pressures which have resulted from past importations. The current proposal of the Department of Interior provides additional safeguards above those in the original Lacey Act which will more carefully control exotic bird importations.

There is an apparent need to consolidate information concerning infectious diseases of wildlife and pet birds into a manual that could be utilized by veterinary students. Although the book "Infectious and Parasitic Diseases of Wild Birds" provides an excellent reference text, additional information is needed concerning cage birds. The committee recommends that the AAAP discuss the need to incorporate this subject material into the poultry disease courses currently taught at veterinary colleges.

Dr. Leibovitz has suggested that a mechanism be developed to provide close cooperation between this Committee and the Wildlife Disease

Association as both groups have major common objectives. It is suggested that the committee pursue during 1975-76 a mechanism to provide a long-term basis of cooperation between the two groups.

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