

Syngamus Trachea Infestation in Emu

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Syngamus trachea, the "gape worm" occurs in the trachea of turkey, fowl, pheasant, guinea fowl, goose and various wild birds. In the trachea, the worm attach themselves to the mucosa and suck blood with consequent catarrhal inflammation to the trachea and anaemia. In heavy infections migration through lungs may cause echymosis, oedema and even lobar pneumonia (Soulsby,1976). The present communication reports a case in Emu.

On post mortem, the carcass was emaciated and pale. The lungs were congested, the liver firm and the intestinal mucosa congested with mucoid contents in the intestinal lumen. There were a large number of bright reddish thin worms attached to the posterior part of tracheal mucosa (Fig 1) surrounded by blood streaked mucus and the worms were identified as *S. trachea* morphologically. No bacterial growth could be obtained on culture of the heart blood and pooled visceral organs on nutrient agar and Mac Conkey's agar.

On histopathological examination of the internal organs, congestion and pneumonic changes were observed in the lungs. The liver showed mild fibrous tissue proliferation.

Young birds seemed more severely affected with this menace (Saif, 2003). Death in the present case could be resulted from the progressive emaciation, anaemia and weakness caused by the heavy parasitism (Hwang, 1964). Death due to obstruction of trachea leading to suffocation and asphyxia is also possible in Syngamiasis (Mc Gregor *et al.*, 1961). Earthworms, slugs and snails play a role in the life cycle of the parasite serving as an auxiliary or transfer host of larvae (Saif, 2003). In the present case, where the birds were reared in a wet and marshy land, possibility of any of these intermediate hosts in the infection cycle seems possible. Removal of the remaining birds to fresh dry ground and Mebendazole, 20mg/kg as single dose orally were suggested as remedy to the farmer and no further deaths were reported.

There appear to be few reports on the occurrence of *S. trachea* infection in Emu on perusal of available literature. Hence this case is documented to report the incidence in this group of birds. Emu rearing recently became popular in India and this parasite could pose a serious menace to production. Serious outbreaks are less likely to occur if birds are reared in dry localities and not kept for long period on same ground (Soulsby,1976).

References

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Fig. 1 *S. trachea* in the tracheal of an Emu

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