The Disease That Starves Your Bird

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

The disease that starves your bird: Psittacine Proventricular Dilatation Syndrome PPDS)

Psittacine Proventricular Dilatation Syndrome (PPDS) is also known by many, less common names, including Macaw Wasting Disease and Neuropathic Gastric Dilatation.

PDS is a disease that destroys gastric mobility and as a result, birds are unable to absorb nutrients due to improper digestion.

Thought to be viral in origin, PPDS is contagious and often devastating. Young or old, imported or domestic and male or female birds are equally at risk for PPDS. The proventriculus is the glandular stomach, where gastric (stomach) juices are secreted. It is directly connected to the esophagus. The ventriculus is the muscular stomach (what most people know as the "gizzard") and is next in the gastric chain through which food passes.

Although most commonly affecting macaws and cockatoos, any of the psittacines are susceptible to this disease. Signs that the owner might see include:

- Depression
- Regurgitation
- Passing whole seeds in the feces

Progressive central nervous system signs, including ataxia (stumbling, off-balance), the inability to perch, head tremors, and even paralysis.

Seizures may be the first sign the owner notices before any signals of gastric upset are evident. Eventually, due to lack of nutrition, affected birds lose the bulk of muscle mass in the breast area - hence the term "wasting" disease.

Appropriate diagnosis is important since PPDS can masquerade as lead or zinc poisoning, foreign body ingestion, and a few other conditions. For unknown reasons, a higher incidence of PPDS is seen in African Grey Parrots and Blue and Gold Macaws. Diagnosis is generally based on history, symptoms, and evidence of an abnormal proventriculus. X-rays taken after the bird is tube fed barium will most often show a greatly enlarged proventriculus and, a fairly normal ventriculus.

Although prognosis for this disease is poor, dietary changes (feeding a high quality diet) and other supportive care, including the use of fluids, may help the bird's quality of life. Always see your avian veterinarian if you are unsure of your bird's health status.

PROVIDE NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Feeding a high-quality diet and other supportive care may help the birds quality of life.

ZuPreem AvianMaintenance FruitBlend
Tasty fruit flavors and complete nutrition in one balanced diet.

Lafeber's Premium Daily Diet
Each pellet contains all the nutrients your bird needs for a full, energetic, and healthy life.

ZuPreem AvianMaintenance Natural
is a healthy diet that meets or exceeds all established nutritional requirements for most any pet bird.

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