

## **INCIDENCE OF TRICHOMONIASIS IN THE BAND-TAILED PIGEONS OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA**

Authors: SILEO, LOUIS, and FITZHUGH, E. LEE

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### INCIDENCE OF TRICHOMONIASIS IN THE BAND-TAILED PIGEONS OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Band-tailed pigeons (*Columba fasciata fasciata*) were trapped at various locations for a life history study between July 1967 and August 1968. When possible, throat swabs were taken to diagnose the presence of *Trichomonas gallinae*. Throat swabs from band-tailed pigeons killed during the hunting season in September 1968 were also obtained at hunter checking stations. Sex, age, and location were recorded. The swabs were

placed in screw-cap tubes of fluid thioglycollate medium with 5% horse serum, 1,000 units/cc of aqueous penicillin G procaine and 2 mg/cc of aqueous dihydrostreptomycin sulfate. The cultures were transported to the laboratory and incubated for 72 hours at 37.5° C. A 0.1 ml sample was streaked the length of a microscope slide and scanned field by field at 100 X.

TABLE 1. Incidence of *T. gallinae* in band-tailed pigeons in southern Arizona

source	infected/total examined			
	immatures	adult males	adult females	total
Live trapped birds:				
Mogollon Rim				
July 1967	0/2	2/13	1/5	3/20
Santa Catalina Mts.				
May, June, July 1968	0/2	0/5	1/3	1/10
Tonto Basin				
June, July 1968	1/8	0/9	1/13	2/30
Subtotal	1/12	2/27	3/21	6/60
Hunter killed birds:				
Huachuca Mts.				
September 1968	1/6	1/20	0/17	2/43
Dos Cabezas Mts.				
September 1968	0/9	0/7	0/10	0/26
Santa Catalina Mts.				
September 1968	0/3	0/12	0/12	0/27
Subtotal	1/18	1/39	0/39	2/96
Total	2/30	3/66	3/60	8/156

We are not certain that the diagnoses for birds killed in the hunting season are reliable. Many of these cultures were handled under less than ideal conditions in the field. The incidence of trichomoniasis in southern Arizona is probably low, and for live trapped birds is not significantly different from the 19.3% incidence reported for 109 band-tailed pigeons in Colorado (Stabler, R. M. 1951. A survey of Colorado band-tailed pigeons, mourning doves, and wild common pigeons for *T. gallinae*. *J. Parasitol.* 37: 471-472). We found infected birds in several localities throughout the band-tailed pigeon range in

southern Arizona.

One band-tailed pigeon artificially infected with a virulent strain in the laboratory died in five days with typical trichomonad lesions; however, none of 259 wild birds examined exhibited lesions. The disease is probably not an important mortality factor in band-tailed pigeon populations at present.

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LOUIS SILEO, JR. and E. LEE FITZHUGH

Arizona Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona

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