Sick Bird Symptoms

Symptoms and Potential Causes ... Bird Species and Diseases They are Most Susceptible to ... Avian Pain Assessment & Management

Primary symptoms and possible causes:

Some of the avian diseases require direct or indirect contact with a diseased bird (viral / bacterial diseases, for example). If a pet hasn't been in contact with other birds for years, then one can exclude / ignore them for the most part. In those cases, it is more likely that nutritional factors or toxicities are involved in the disease process.

One can narrow the possibilities further down by considering susceptibility of the species (as listed). If none are listed, then most birds may be susceptible to the disease.

Index of Bird Diseases

Bird Species and Their Respective Syndromes (Lists diseases specific bird species are most susceptible to)

Nost Notable Symptoms:

- **Beak:**
  - Overgrown Beak
  - Beak / Deformed (not caused by an injury)
  - Beak: Spots - refer to Fatty Liver Disease
  - Beak Abnormalities and Missing Feathers - refer to PBFD
  - Dry Peeling Beak
  - Clear peeling liquid coming out of beak: Yeast

- **Bleeding**

- **Breathing / Labored**

(c) 2010 Image & Info courtesy of Olathe Animal Hospital, http://www.olatheanimalhospital.com
• **Coughing**

• **Drooling:** **Yeast**

• **Eyes:** Swollen, Red and/or Runny

• **Feather Problems**
  - **Feather and Skin Disorders** (irritated sore skin, itchy skin, feathers falling out without being plucked, misshaped feathers, abnormal feather development)
  - **Feather Plucking** (birds pulling out their own feathers)

• **Head** Twisting, Unnatural Head Positioning, Circling

• **Head - Wet feathers, possibly soiled:** A wet head on an otherwise dry body typically describes what happens when a bird vomits, as opposed to regurgitation. Other symptoms include head shaking. **Supportive care** needs to be provided until the bird can be taken to the vet, which should happen as soon as possible.

• **Joints / Legs / Feet:** Swollen, Maybe Painful

• **Legs:** Weak, Paralysis

• **Lethargy / Weakness / Depression**

• **Bird Poop / Droppings** (Abnormal) and/or Increased Water Consumption and More Urine in Droppings

• **Respiratory Problems** / Breathing Difficulties

• **Seizures**

• **Skin Disorders** (irritated sore skin, itchy skin, feathers falling out without being plucked, misshaped feathers, abnormal feather development)

• **Sudden Death**

• **Swollen Abdomen or Crop**

• **Swollen Vent**

• **Tumors**

• **Voice** - Loss of voice or changes

• **Vomiting**

• **Weight - Changes:** Changes in a bird's weight can be a sign of a health problem
• **Wheezing**

• **Wing** - Deformed (not by an injury)

---

Swollen Vent:

[**Prolapsed Cloaca**](#)

**Breeding-age Hens Only:**

[**Egg Binding**](#) - Swollen vent, weakness

**Egg yolk peritonitis** - Common / possible symptoms: Sudden death, loss of appetite/anorexia, weakness, depression, respiratory distress, lethargy, fluffed feathers, lack of vocalizations, yolk-colored droppings, swollen vent and/or abdomen (the swelling feels spongy to the touch), and ascites. Some of these symptoms also mimic egg binding. Most commonly seen in cockatiels, lovebirds, and waterfowl.

Swollen, Possibly Runny Eyes

Swollen Joints / Legs / Feet

[**Arthritis**](#)

[**Bumble Foot**](#)

[**Gout**](#)

[**Scaly Legs / Swollen Feet**](#) - Common in canaries and finches.

[**Staph Infections** / Foot Infection: The foot is likely to be swollen and may feel hot.

[**Broken / Injured Legs / Feet**](#)

Respiratory Problems

Deformed Beak (not caused by an injury)
Scissors Beak - This is most commonly seen in cockatoos and macaws, but can occur in any species.

Parrot Beak - Most common in cockatoos, but can occur in any parrot species.

Deformed Wing (not caused by an injury):

Angel Wing - common in waterfowl, such as geese, swans, and ducks

Tumors

Fatty tumors (lipomas and xanthomas)

Marek's Disease - Occurs mainly in chickens under 16 weeks of age.
Symptoms: Leg and/or wing paralysis, high mortality, tumors on visceral organs.

Lymphoid Leucosis (Poultry Viral Disease / Infectious Disease): Occurs mainly in laying hens between 4 and 10 months or age. Tumors in the bursa of Fabricius will spread to many other internal organs, especially the liver, spleen and kidney.

Voice / Loss of or changes

Most commonly caused by an infection in the trachea. Most often fungal (aspergillus), but could also be bacterial.

In budgies, cockatiels and some other species, goiter (an enlarged thyroid gland) is also known to cause sqeaking or crying sounds in addition to regurgitation and coughing. The enlarged gland compresses the trachea leading to voice changes and respiratory difficulties.

The vet needs to run diagnostic tests, such as cultures and blood work.

NEED A VET?
USA: Find Your Local Avian Veterinarian

Information contained on this website is provided as general reference only. For application to specific circumstances, professional advice should be sought.
If you would like to add to or correct any of the above information, or would like to share with the AvianWeb visitors your own experiences, please e-mail the AvianWeb Webmaster.