

Ex Libris

Book Review
by Sheldon Dingle
Alhambra, California

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE *Microscope Use and Pathogen Identification in Birds and Reptiles*

by Dr. Danny Brown, BVSc (Hons), BSc (Hons)
MACVSc (Avian Health)

Soft Cover – 50-page full color, easy to read reference on the microscope and use and pathogen identification in birds and reptiles for aviculturists and herpetologists with a desire to be in control of health problems in their collections.

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P. O. Box 6288
South Tweed Heads
NSW 2486, AUSTRALIA
Price: \$20.86 (Australian dollars)

Telephone: +61 7 5590 7777
E-mail: birdkeeper@birdkeeper.com.au
Website: www.birdkeeper.com.au

My Dear Readers, this is a book I really wish had been available back in the 1970s when I was working with the very large bird collection of the legendary Dave West as well as with my own more humble collection. In those days about the only way we could learn why a bird died was via the necropsy – not very helpful for the the defunct bird. It turned out that certain of our species were quite susceptible to infestations of parasitic worms – the grass parakeets and various exotic doves in particular.

We were lucky in that the State of California had an agricultural lab close by. The State vets were primarily interested in chickens but they agreed to do the necropsies on our exotic birds (watching for any avian disease that might affect the chickens). Happily, one of the vets, Dr. Ralph Cooper also kept exotic birds at home. He agreed to spend time teaching me how to use a microscope especially to monitor the birds' droppings for the ova of parasitic worms – our chief nemesis.

The State lab had a teaching microscope upon which the teacher and the student used separate eye-pieces to see the same thing. Dr. Cooper spent many an hour showing me exactly what the ova of the different parasites looked like. I became good at it and we instituted a routine monitoring of our birds' droppings. We basically eliminated loss to the worms and saved many birds.

This excellent book can be *your* Dr. Cooper (may he rest in peace) courtesy of Dr. Danny Brown. The book is very complete with chapters on • **THE MICROSCOPE**; types of microscopes, parts of the microscope, special techniques, selection of samples, fresh smear samples, fecal flotation, the interpretation of the results • **PATHOGEN IDENTIFICATION**; appearance of fecal smears, common background material, etc. • **AVIAN PATHOGENS**; roundworms, threadworms, gizzard worms, tapeworms, caecal worms, yeast, motile flagellate protozoa, coccidia, gram positive smear, gram negative smear, histopathology. Damn – this brings back memories.

I sincerely urge you folks (especially those of you in the boondocks where a visit to an avian vet is a great hardship) to purchase this excellent book. When you master just a *portion* of the information, you'll save birds. If you save just *one* nice bird, you will have paid for the book many times over. Get in touch with ABK Publishers straightaway. You'll be well pleased. ❖

