

CURE OF TAPEWORMS IN GYRFALCON

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In February of 1969, I noticed tapeworm segments in the mutes of one of my female Gyrfalcon. From then on, I kept the bird on a screen perch and checked the mutes on the daily removed paper.

The food of the bird which up until then was mostly freshly killed birds (pigeon) was changed to defrosted day-old chicks, chickenheads and occasionally defrosted pigeon.

When the parasites were first noticed, the bird weighed approximately three-quarters of a pound and was from then on fed twice daily until up to the end of April when it weighed over four pounds.

The segments, each 1/8 inch long, were found irregularly and sometimes were missing for approximately eight days. The segments did get smaller in size as the weight of the bird increased; the number of them, however, remained constant and no whole worms were found.

I had the impression that by feeding pigeons there were more segments in the mutes than by feeding chickenheads and day-old chicks of which the bird was particularly after the egg yolk in them. By the end of April, I had some of my other birds sick with a bacterial disease which I have cured previously with Gantrisin Terramycine, and as a precaution gave all my birds one-quarter tablet Gantrisin (125 mg.) plus codliver oil pills.

The above-mentioned Gyr did not show any sign of sickness, but received as a precaution for three days, one-quarter tablet Gantrisin and one codliver oil pill daily. After three days, I found in the mutes approximately twenty tapeworms which seemed to be attached to two pieces of shed lining of the intestines.

The same day, I received from Germany a drug mentioned by Dr. Bruell on page 124 of "Die Beizjagd," by the name of Yomesan, manufactured by Bayer Leverkusen, West Germany. It says in this book, "Dr. Saar gave falcon [assumed Peregrine] by empty crop one-quarter tablet (125 g.) in a piece of meat and had prompt results after twenty minutes." I think that there is a mistake in the book and it should be (125 mg.). This occurs to me, however, as I write this down. I related the (125 g.) to the weight of the bird, which by approximately 2,000 g. should then receive two tablets of 0.5 g. This seemed to me too much, and I therefore did go by the human dose which recommends one tablet for children

under two years. The next day I gave the bird by empty crop one tablet 0.5 g. in a piece of meat approximately one-half to one ounce.

After approximately ten minutes, the bird developed diarrhea and as in Dr. Saar's case, approximately twenty minutes later twenty to twenty-five tapeworms were found dead in the mutes. The longest ones were over five inches mostly with head attached as seen under the microscope. The bird was then fed, and after several hours the mutes started to look perfect. By now, several days after, no bad side effects can be noticed except that the food consumption of the bird has decreased which seemed to point in the right direction. It is felt that the same result can be obtained with a smaller dose of Yomesan.

A quarter tablet was given to another falconer whose bird, a female tundra Peregrine, was suffering from the same malady, and similar results were obtained.

The fact that segments in the mutes will not always be found in a case of tapeworm infestation shows the following experience: I received a two year old male Gyrfalcon in very poor condition. This bird was kept under the same conditions as above. It died after two months. The mutes were constantly checked and no tapeworm segments were ever found. Post mortem revealed the falcon died of air sacculitis and swollen kidneys (nephrosis) and as stated in the report of a qualified pathologist from the Department of Agriculture, "A heavy infestation of tapeworms was present and no other internal parasites could be found."

Therefore I ask. How can a diagnosis of tapeworm be made when no segments are found in the mutes?

If anyone can advise me, it would be appreciated.