

**MENANCANTHUS STRAMINEUS INFESTATION IN GREEN PEACOCKS
(PAVO MUTICUS)**

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SUMMARY

A group of twelve peacocks (*Pavo muticus*) were clinically examined. Eight (66%) were infested with the poultry louse *Menacanthus stramineus*. All infested peacocks were lighter in weight. Asuntol® powder was used to treat against the louse. The infested birds improved in appearance a week post treatment and there was absence of louse on the birds.

Key words: Peacocks, *Menacanthus stramineus*, light weight, fracture.

INTRODUCTION

Green peacock (*Pavo muticus*) was introduced to Africa from South East Asia (Payne, 1959). It is now domesticated in certain homes in Sokoto Township and some other parts of the country. It is kept for aesthetic reason or as companion bird under semi- intensive system (Payne, 1959). Green peacock is omnivorous, and contact with other birds while feeding is not impossible which allows for horizontal ectoparasitic infestation.

Menacanthus stramineus is a biting louse found on the body of poultry and occurs on the skin of those parts of the body which are not densely feathered (Adene, 2004). Perhaps the reason for the unthriftiness and lower body weight of infested peacock is as a result of the infestation by lice. Lousiness usually results in itching and pecking of the area resulting in rough feathers and poor condition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An unthrifty adult peacock was brought for treatment at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (Avian Clinic Unit) The complaint was an open fracture of the radius (Fig. 1). It was part of a flock of 12 birds (6 peacocks, 6 peahens). On physical examination, tiny unidentified ectoparasites were found crawling on the body. A decision was made to visit the house for further investigation and to examine the remaining peacocks. In the house there were 6 peacocks and 6 peahens. On physical examination of the birds, tiny like ectoparasites were collected from 8 of the 12 birds using previously formalin soaked cotton wool wrapped on a pair of forceps. The ectoparasites were identified under light microscope as *Menacanthus stramineus* as described by Soulsby (1982).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The fecal samples of the peacocks were negative for any parasite ova. All the 12 birds were dusted with Asuntol© powder, and all infested birds improved in appearance a week after treatment and no louse was observed any more on any of the infested birds.

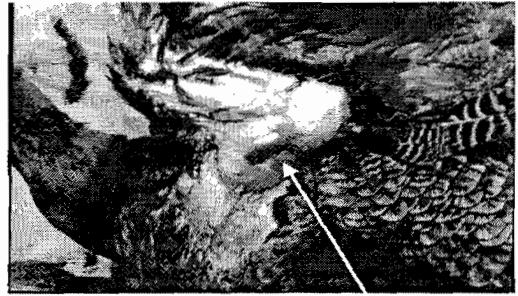


Plate I: Infested Peacock

A backyard poultry was seen nearby and may be a logical source of infestation to the peacock. Probably the fracture sustained may not be unconnected with the restlessness from the irritation by the lice. The owner who reported that the birds feed well may not spend much time at home to notice the discomfort experienced by the infested birds.

As the source of infestation the owner observed that the peacocks and peahens were usually in contact with the domestic fowls that stray into their compound. Attempt at catching and examining the chicken seen was fruitless.

Thus, it is obvious that the affected birds must have been infested by stray fowls, as peacocks roam freely within the compound (Molokwu and Haruna, 1990). Because of the closeness nature of this bird, it is expected that much attention and care should be given to it, so as to be free of ectoparasites and injury.

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