

Pigeon Paramyxovirus



- Pigeon paramyxovirus causes disease in pigeons and doves, and is responsible for die-offs of Eurasian collared doves in Colorado.

Species Affected in Colorado

- Eurasian collared doves (invasive species).
- Potentially native doves (mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons).

What to Look For

- Die-offs of doves, with 3 or more birds found dead in a small area.
- Sick birds that do not fly away when approached.

Cause and Transmission

Pigeon paramyxovirus (PPMV-1) is endemic in the United States, but was first found in wild birds in Colorado during the winter of 2014 when it caused a die-off of Eurasian collared doves.

PPMV-1 is a specific type of avian paramyxovirus that primarily affects doves and pigeons. Outside the United States, some strains of PPMV-1 have infected birds other than doves and pigeons, including unvaccinated chickens. Therefore it is important to promptly report die-offs for further workup. PPMV-1 is spread by direct contact between birds. Control of the disease includes limiting congregation of birds by removing bird feeders and bird baths, and disposing of carcasses. PPMV-1 has been isolated from mourning doves, but large die-offs of mourning doves have not been reported. While all die-offs of wildlife (3 or more animals/birds) should be promptly reported, even single mourning dove deaths should be reported in areas where PPMV-1 is active.



Eurasian collared dove with PPMV-1. The bird is weak, resting on its keel, and cannot fly. Photo credit: Allen Vitt, CPW

Public Health Concerns

Although PPMV-1 has not been reported to infect humans, other avian paramyxoviruses can cause mild conjunctivitis (pinkeye) in humans that have directly handled infected birds. If instructed to dispose of carcasses by wildlife authorities, wear gloves or use a bag to pick up the carcasses. Dispose of the carcasses in an outdoor dumpster and immediately wash hands. Birds may be carrying other diseases of concern. Never handle sick or injured wildlife. Avian paramyxoviruses are not known to cause disease in non-avian domestic animals such as dogs and cats, but other diseases may be present in carcasses. Always prevent pets from eating carcasses.

Additional Information/References

Schuler KL, et al. 2012. Expansion of an Exotic Species and Concomitant Disease Outbreaks: Pigeon Paramyxovirus in Free-Ranging Eurasian Collared Doves. *EcoHealth* (9) 163-170. DOI: 10.1007/s10393-012-0758-6

Rev 12/2014