

## AVIAN CLINICAL EXAMINATION (part 1)

Clinical examination can be an interesting and challenging task because of the masking phenomenon in birds {ability to hide illness signs}. **The appreciable sick look is seen when the bird is no longer able to hide signs.**

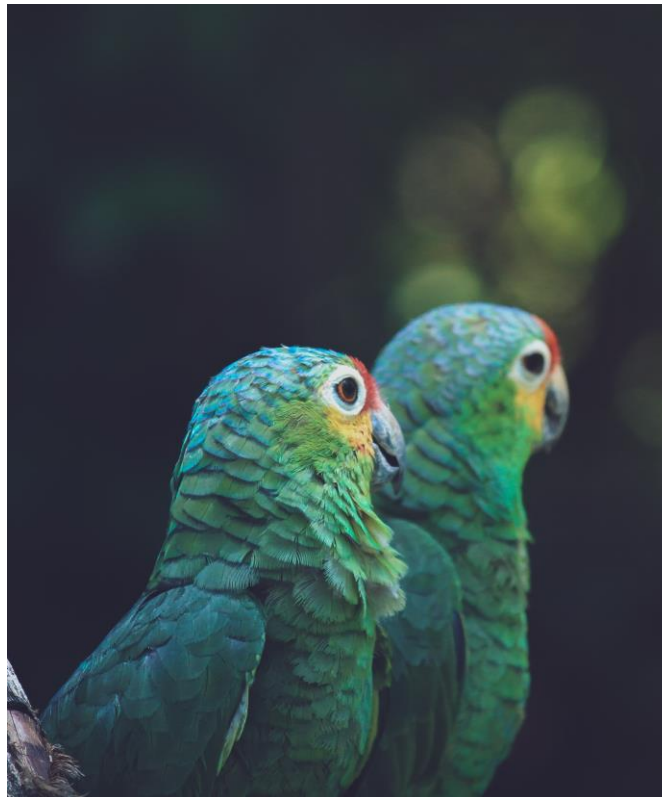
**Important step before you proceed!!!!**

If in case you observe things like dyspnoea, open-mouth breathing, haemorrhage, collapse, seizures, wings dropped.... **ITS AN EMERGENCY AND SHOULD BE TREATED IMMEDIATELY TO STABILIZE THE BIRD.**

**STABLE 👍... THEN PROCEED**

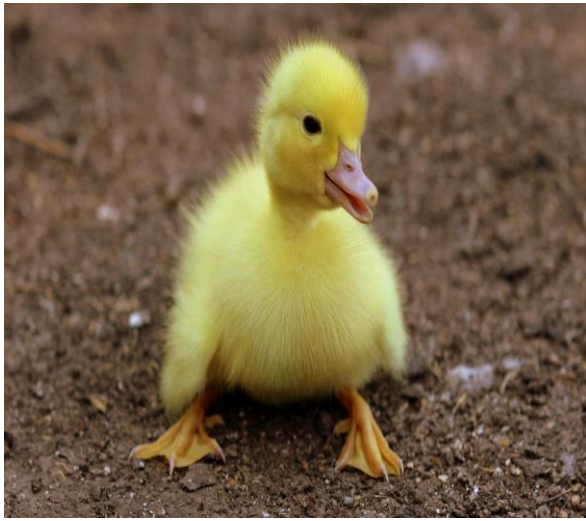
Background history to be looked into:

- signalment
- origin of the bird
- husbandry
- nutrition
- behaviour
- reproductive history
- previous medical history.



☞ **CHECKLIST FOR RESPIRATION:**  
respiratory rate and effort.  
Note any changes in voice.  
Nares clear and symmetrical?  
Discharge or swelling or accumulation of

- cage condition and hygiene.
- cage amenities (ropes and toys)
- general information about origin of the bird, quarantine info, sex, age
- identification if any (microchips)
- kind of food offered and whether all the components were eaten or not.
- Any supplements?



ITS VERY MUCH IMPORTANT TO THOROUGHLY CHECK WHEN YOU ARE DOING PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: **ANY ABNORMALITY REGARDING THE FOLLOWING MUST BE NOTED:**

- \*Bodyweight and body condition score.
- \*Coelomic area and cloaca.
- \*Beak and nares.
- \*eyes.
- \*ears
- \*oral cavity
- \*head and neck
- \*palpation of crop
- \*pectoral muscles and keel
- \*wings, limbs and feet/claws
- \*overall examination of feathers
- \*uropygial glands
- \*cardiovascular and respiratory system

#### Checklist in cardio:

1. Auscultate the heart noting, wherever possible, the rate and presence of arrhythmias and murmurs.
2. Palpate peripheral pulses at the ventral aspect of the elbow or medial hock.
3. Assess basilar vein refill time and colour of mucous membranes.



EXTRAS: Fluffing their feathers, sitting still and sleeping more signs are often referred to as the 'sick bird look'.

Keep your required materials and equipment ready before you do physical examination.

#### ALSO LOOK FOR:

1. A recent history of anaesthesia, voice change, diet change etc.
2. Evidence of yawning, coughing, sneezing, head shaking or picking at the nares are all suggestive of respiratory disease.
3. The bird may pick or traumatize a specific area in cases of nephritis (syngonum and/or flank) and musculoskeletal disease (over affected bones or joints), or signs of irritation.
4. Photoperiod, type and intensity of light, day and night routine, time allowed out of the cage and time interacting with the owners.
5. Recent changes to the living quarters and surrounding environment, routine, wing clip etc.

Further reading:

BSAVA manual of avian practice.

Avian medicine and surgery in practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn by Bob Doneley.