



BOOK REVIEW

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Microscope Use and Pathogen Identification in Birds and Reptiles

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Published by: Australian Bird Keeper Publications, PO Box 6288, South Tweed Heads, NSW

We thank ABK for providing the Society with a copy to review

Description

“**Under the Microscope**” is a soft cover book of 53 pages, 86 colour plates and is available from the Society Book Steward Mr Jack Hannant on (08) 8346 2953, or direct from ABK (with postage an extra \$4).

Review

While initially most people would be put off by the idea of peering down a microscope at bird faeces, there is a lot of information to be gained by engaging in this pastime. Danny Brown opens his introduction with the succinct statement “Correct diagnostics are the key to correct treatments” and this sums up the basic ideals and aims of the book...how to teach a lay person the basics of microscope use and identification of parasitic disease. So often a sick bird is given a dose of an anti-worm medication “just in case”, but does the bird have worms? If it does, which pathogen is the problem? By knowing the answer to these questions the most effective medication can be selected and administered quickly.

The book is divided into the following sections: Overview, The Microscope, Pathogen Identification, Avian Pathogens, Reptile Pathogens and Artefacts/Pseudoparasites. In the first section Danny introduces us into the world of the microscope; how to drive one and how to prepare specimens of faeces (both individual and colony) and preparation of microscope slides. The next three sections on Parasite identification in birds and reptiles comprise a series of mugshots of the “nasties”, with which to compare your specimen. The last section looks at pieces of grass, pollen, fluff and other debris that may resemble parasites.

This book introduces us to the mysterious microscopic world and is a useful tool to aid home diagnosis of bird diseases. It is an ideal way to periodically check for the presence of worms in both individual birds and in a pooled colony sample, as well as monitoring the success of a worm eradication program. Obviously it does not take the place of professional Veterinarian assistance.