

THE EFFECTS OF BODY CONDITION SCORE AND COLOUR MORPH OF ROCK PIGEONS (*COLUMBA LIVIA*) ON CHEWING LOUSE (PSOCODEA: PHTHIRAPTERA) INFESTATIONS IN MANITOBA

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Taxonomy and infestation parameters of chewing lice have been well documented in Manitoba. The objectives of this research were to determine if there were relationships between body condition score or colour morph of rock pigeons (*Columba livia*) and the prevalence or mean intensity of their chewing louse infestations. Forty-four pigeons were used for this research. Euthanized pigeons were obtained from Manitoba Haven Rehabilitation Hospital and washed in a bucket of hot water, twice with and once without liquid dish detergent. The water was drained through a 90 µm sieve, and the collected chewing lice were identified and counted. Pigeons were body condition scored on a scale of 1-5 using a chart; these body condition scores were divided into three categories for data analysis. Pigeons were divided into five categories based on colour morph, ranging from light-coloured to melanistic. Data were analyzed using Quantitative Parasitology (QPWeb). Total chewing louse prevalence was 97.7%, and mean intensity was 174.3. There were no significant differences in prevalence or mean intensity of chewing lice between categories of either body condition score or colour morph. Information concerning the relationship between louse infestations and bird body condition is sparse; this research provides new information.