

PARASITOLOGICAL RESEARCH in woodpigeons

How to collect birds bodies for parasitological investigation

by the courtesy of Izabel Rząd – Bird Migration Research Foundation – Poland -University of Szczecin

First. The bird must to to be prepared and frozen in a deep freezer or freezing compartment of a normal refrigerator **as soon as possible** after its death!!! The bird **CANNOT** be **frozen, defrosted and frozen once more** – such case damage number of parasites!!!

Second. There are a few options you can choose to preserve useful material for a study.

At the beginning examine carefully birds body after shooting:

1. if you find any unusual tumors, clear disfunctions, disease symptoms or extreme poor condition do not use this bird for cooking – it could be dangerous for you. So, you need put it into plastic bag, add description (see paragraph **"Third"**), close the bag carefully, even in double bags (if not closed it will be dried during storing) and freeze (according to the paragraph **"First"**).
2. If you do not want to eat the hunted pigeon, you can simply freeze it as described in point 1. A disadvantage is that stored bodies are voluminous and you will not taste your victim.
3. Otherwise prepare the bird for use in a kitchen as well as for the scientific examination.

For performing this option you need to have: as tools – strong scissors for cutting bones (as for chickens bodies), tiny scissors for cutting a skin and soft internal connections, sharp knife (or, better, scalpel); a pincet is very useful; plastic bag – for storage organs from individual bodies (according paragraph "**First**").

(1) Remove feathers as usual for cooking (Fig. 1), BUT – following arrows:

(a) **do not remove** skin from a neck (cut the neck as close as possible to a head),

(b) **do not remove** internal organs **now**.

(2) The preparation:

(a) with knife and the fine scissors cut the skin along the front of the neck – from the body to the end of neck (not visible at Fig. 1!),

(b) cut carefully with knife and the fine scissors the skin from a back end of sternum to the cloaca (do not broke intestines and **cloaca – important**) – Fig. 2.

(c) using strong scissors cut, at both sides, ribs up to bones fixing wings (Fig. 2),

(d) cut these bones (strong scissors needed) and remove pectoral muscles with the sternum (best for cooking!) – you will have the tissue as at Fig. 2,

(e) with fine scissors cut the skin **AROUND the cloaca !!!** (Fig. 2),

(f) look at the visible internal organs: there could be long, slime whitish parasites – **do not lost them**, but collect them with removed organs,

(g) **FINALLY**, remove carefully all internal organs from the

beginning of the neck (head end) to the cloaca (including) and put them **all together** into the plastic bag.

Note here:

– when removing the esophagus and trachea: if lungs can be easily removed – allow to remove them from the body, but if problems – cut off them from trachea that should be processed with other organs,

– be careful with the liver – if gal bladder is visible **avoid to broke it!**,

– any delicate connections of internal organs with rest of the body should be cut off with the tiny scissors.

(h) NOW, if the procedure was finished successfully, and the inside is enough clean of blood and not damaged, the **more experienced person** could try to determinate sex of the bird: if on an upper part of nephros you can see TWO dark, oval items (around few milimeters long) – the bird is a MALE, when instead of them you will find ONE whitish, flat organ – your bird is a FEMALE. This procedure needs some experience, but **sexing is important!**

Third. Write on an enclosed label or piece of paper: **(a) date**, **(b) exact locality** (the best – GPS co-ordinates or name of county/nearest town, that could be easily identify on a map); use ONLY pencil or water-resistant point-pen, NOT usual ball-pen. ***It is essential to describe these data about every individual SEPARATELY as separately they must be packed into bags. !!!***