



SICK AND DYING BIRDS IN YOUR YARD

Over the past four summers, the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC), Atlantic Region, has received numerous reports of **sick and dying birds around bird feeders and water baths in people's yards** throughout the Maritimes from a disease called trichomonosis. We expect this summer will be no different. The CCWHC is tracking this emerging disease to better understand its impact on wild bird populations and would like your help.



Male Purple finch



Male American goldfinch

SPECIES AFFECTED:

American goldfinch & Purple finch

CAUSATIVE AGENT:

Trichomonas gallinae, a microscopic parasite.
This parasite does not cause disease in humans or animals such as dogs and cats.

DISEASE SPREAD:

Transmission of *Trichomonas* between birds is thought to occur by direct contact or through feed and water contaminated with the parasite.

CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Lethargy
- Gaping beak
- Regurgitating food
- Matted, wet feathers around the beak & face
- Fluffed-up plumage
- Emaciation
- Laboured breathing



Sick purple finch

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE SICK OR DEAD BIRDS IN YOUR YARD:

The CCWHC needs to examine dead birds to confirm the disease and study it further. This work would not be possible without public participation. **If you collect a dead bird, follow this steps:**

- (1) Place a plastic bag over hand and pick up the dead bird with hand covered by the plastic bag
- (2) Invert the plastic bag over the bird and tie the top
- (3) Wash hands well with warm water and soap
- (4) Deliver the dead bird in the bag to the Post Mortem Office at the Atlantic Veterinary College, where you will be asked to fill out a form

If you live in NS or PEI, you can contact your local Natural Resources or Fish and Wildlife office to ask if they can collect the bird, freeze it and submit it to CCWHC. In NB please contact CCWHC directly to report mortalities and get information on how to send birds for post mortem examination.

Collected specimens submitted must include the following information:

- (1) Submitter's name, address, telephone number and e-mail address
- (2) Location where dead bird was found
- (3) Date dead bird was found
- (4) Number of dead or sick birds observed

All birds submitted will have a complete post mortem examination, and, subsequently, a full diagnostic report will be sent to the person who submitted them. For further information contact us directly (902-628-4314 or atlantic@ccwhc.ca) or visit our website <http://atlantic.ccwhc.ca>, under 'Projects and Cases'.