

## Shubot Center To Develop Parrot PDD Diagnostic Test

### Center hopes to develop PDD diagnostic test for parrots

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At one point in time Proventriculal Dilatation Disease was known as macaw wasting disease.

Texas A&M's Schubot Exotic Bird Health Center is developing a new diagnostic test for Proventricular Dilatation Disease (PDD), a wasting-type disease that affects many parrot species.

The blood test aims for a better diagnosis. PDD is currently diagnosed clinically or by a crop biopsy. Clinical diagnoses are not always accurate and studies indicate that crop biopsies are only 40 percent to 70 percent accurate, said Dr. Ian Tizard, BVMS, Ph.D., director of the center. "And then there's post mortem, when it's too late," he added.

Tizard pointed out, however, that the PDD diagnostic test is still in the early stages.

"We need to test it on a lot more samples before we are able to offer it," he said.

PDD is an important disease to diagnose and control because it is the most significant killer of large parrots in captivity, according to Dr. Tizard. "It is also a major problem in some aviaries and in some of the parrot recovery programs where endangered species are dying from it," he said.

It is generally assumed that PDD is a viral disease, but that has yet to be completely proven, according to Tizard.

PDD is quite erratic, he says. Some parrots get sick quickly and die while others may recover. Some parrots with the same exposure might not even be affected.

"It's really very difficult," Tizard said. "That's part of our hesitation before we offer the diagnostic test because we need to assure ourselves that it is accurate. The last thing we want people doing is euthanizing birds on the basis of this test. We are not at that stage yet."

The center is accepting donations of terminally-ill PDD birds to further their studies. "If birds are going to be humanely euthanized because of PDD, then we have an interest, especially if they are located near Texas," Tizard said.

For more information on how to donate, call 979-845-4276.