

Tumors in lovebirds

By Didier Mervilde

Tumors in lovebirds can certainly be seen as a rarity. This does not mean that they cannot occur. The main reason is that most of the tumors are located in the body, and thus cannot be observed. These tumors can only be discovered by certain signs that the birds are expressing. Tumors of the kidneys presses on the sciatic nerve (nervus ischiadicus). This nerve is the largest nerve in animals and humans. By birds it innervates the legs. Thereby Lovebirds start inexplicable limping. Usually they become paralyzed on one side. Typically, they begin to gnaw the leg and attempting biting. There is also a number of internal tumors such as tumors of the testicles and ovaries but none has a positive prognosis. Almost all birds with internal tumors will prematurely die or euthanized. The only internal tumor that can be treated surgically is the tumor of the crop. Crop tumors are usually malignant. Thereby they can provide for metas-

tases elsewhere in the body, such as the lungs and liver. Prior to surgery is it better to get a biopsy or a radiography of the lungs. The operation is always very risky since the tumor is always located near the vicinity of a carotid artery. These operations are quite expensive and are rarely performed on lovebirds.

But not all limps to the eyes, beak and legs are automatically tumors. Mostly we have to deal with injuries to the eyes but they are usually easy to fix. When in doubt, always consult a veterinarian.

