

C12: *LEUCOCYTOZOON* SPP. IN BIRDS OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

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Research to document blood-borne parasites of Australian birds was started in a collaborative programme between the International Reference Centre for Avian Haematozoa (IRCAH) at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, and the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Gold Coast, southeast Queensland. Blood smears and organ samples of 496 birds belonging to 68 species of 31 families were collected and examined for blood parasites. Of those animals examined, 22.2% were infected with blood parasites. Of those infected, the majority (n=65, 59%) were found to harbour haemosporidian parasites in the genus *Leucocytozoon*. Members of the bird families Cracticidae, Meliphagidae, Oriolidae and Podargidae showed the highest prevalences, ranging from 38% (in Cracticidae) to 77% (in Oriolidae). On histopathological examination, tissue sections revealed megaloschizonts in the spleen, muscle and lung of 5 birds which had shown relatively high intensities of *Leucocytozoon* sp. gametocytes in blood smears. Gametocytes of leucocytozoids were obvious on examination of Giemsa-stained thin blood smears, although in 12 individuals, infections with other haemoparasites (*Plasmodium*, *Haemoproteus*, *Trypanosoma*, microfilariae) were also identified.