

Abstract

A study was conducted between November 2008 and March 2009 to determine the prevalence of haemoparasites in different age and sex groups of free-range local ducks in Nairobi and its environs. The ducks were categorized into ducklings (<2 months), growers (2 to 6 months) and adult ducks (>6 months). A total of 47 adults, 50 growers and 48 ducklings comprising 77 females and 68 males were sampled. Two thin blood smears were prepared from each bird, processed and examined for haemoparasites. Data obtained was analyzed as number of ducks of different age and sex groups infected with a particular haemoparasite. Haemoparasites were observed in 70/145 (48.28 %) of the ducks. Four haemoparasites identified were *Aegyptinella pullorum* 59/145 (40.69 %), *Leucocytozoon caulleryi* 10/145 (6.90 %), *Haemoproteus* species 1/145 (0.69 %) and *Eperythrozoon* species 5/145 (3.45 %). Their prevalence was 38.57 % (27/70), 24.29 % (17/70), 20.0 % (14/70) and 17.14 % (12/70) ($p>0.05$) for Embakasi, Westlands, Kasarani and Thika districts, respectively. Grower ducks had a prevalence of 35.71 % (25/70), adults, 34.29 % (24/70) and ducklings, 30.0 % (21/70) ($p>0.05$). Male and female ducks had an equal prevalence of 50.0 % (35/70). This study has demonstrated the occurrence of haemoparasites in different sexes and age groups of apparently healthy appearing ducks for the first time in Kenya. Their impact on duck productivity need further investigation and control strategies initiated to improve the industry.