

## THE PROBLEM FOR WILD BIRDS

The bird table has become a very important food source for British wild birds but like any popular restaurant it can be a place where individuals mix and exchange 'bugs'. Unlike the restaurant they even share a plate and often share a bath!



Salmonella problems may be seen Jan-March and later protozoal problems have become a problem from June to September. The commonest species affected are greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*), house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*).



Whilst feeding of gardenbirds is important to them we need to be cautious to avoid spreading disease through them at feeders.

It is very important that they are able to breed and rear their young successfully.

Good hygiene is vital and Vetark is already providing **Ark-Klens** to minimise disease transmission.

**Ark-Klens** is safe for the birds and for the user, it is effective against major pathogens (now tested effective against flu virus), and is non-scented so that birds are not put off.



In addition to being a very good cleanser it is a very effective disinfectant. Periodically, the use of a broad spectrum disinfectant such as **Tamodine E** is well worthwhile.



Another important aspect of disease control is maximising immunity.

Vetark's newest products **Sprinkle Support** and **CitroSan** aim to maximise the birds natural immune response at times when they are under stress such as breeding or overwintering.



**Sprinkle Support** is a palatable bird food supplement with friendly probiotic bacteria, prebiotic soluble fibre and vitamins to maximise bird health. As its name suggests it is sprinkled on the food.

**CitroSan** is a natural biocide extracted from oranges. It is palatable but inhibits bacterial and protozoal contamination of bird baths, whilst at the same time again like **Sprinkle Support** stimulates natural immunity.



### The choice of foods

The choice of foods for wildbirds is very important, although garden birds will accept a wide range the most popular mixes include black sunflower and peanuts (which must be tested for aflatoxin by the suppliers).

Wheat and oats will attract pigeons. The same basic mix is enjoyed also by red squirrels if you are lucky enough to have them in the area - although they also like treats of hazelnuts etc.

Squirrels especially benefit from feeding during the summer - after the spring shoots etc and before the winter nuts.

Feeding of birds in the summer is controversial, and hygiene is especially vital to ensure infections are not taken back to the nest.

Fat balls etc are popular and welcomed especially in the cooler months but be careful about home made versions and possible rancid fats which are unpalatable, and also potentially toxic.

## RESCUED WILDLIFE

**AVIPRO** is a probiotic combination of bacteria, soluble fibre, enzymes, electrolytes and vitamins. Its high palatability means that it can be added to the drinking water making its use simple for all rescued birds & animals throughout their period in rescue centres.



Its function is to support the animals natural bacterial gut flora at a time when the animal is sick and stressed. Because it can be given 'hands off' it is ideal in the run up to release.

**Critical Care Formula (CCF)** is a high potency blend of protein hydrolysate and carbohydrates to use as emergency critical care support-food for absolutely any species! It can be given via the finest tube to the tiniest pipistrelle or leveret.



Vetark **NUTROBAL** is a vitamin/mineral supplement specifically formulated as a high calcium 'balancer' to correct diets deficient in calcium. When mixed at 2:1 with **ACE-High** it provides the ideal blend for adult birds - this is available as a readymix called **ARKVITS**. **NUTROBAL** has been used very successfully for many years by bat rescuers to raise the calcium levels of the insects they feed to their charges.

Nutritional osteodystrophy resulting in badly deformed bones has become a problem seen by some of the wildlife workers using supplementary feeding with wild colonies of red squirrels and **NUTROBAL** has proved valuable in boosting levels of calcium and vitamins in the feed to avoid this problem.



Our tamed iodine **Tamodine Wound Dressing** is also very useful to clean up injuries, its kind action belies its cleansing and antiseptic properties.

## AVOIDING SPREADING DISEASE WHEN FEEDING WILD BIRDS

A number of wild bird species will come to the table and 'share' any bugs they carry. Doves for instance may carry Trichomonad species which may be involved in the problems seen in other species. Some may have Salmonellae which they could spread.

To minimise the risks of transmission to other bird species feeding at the table - and the risk of them taking such infections back to nestlings there are measures that you can take.

- Use a quality seed mix
- Wipe off obvious faecal soiling on a daily basis with **Ark-Klens**
- Ideally put out only what will be eaten in 2-3 days to avoid contamination
- Clean the bird table every few days
- At high stress times, especially when birds have young in the nest, consider using **CitroSan** in bird baths and **Sprinkle Support** on their food.
- Clean and replenish the bird bath with **CitroSan** weekly
- Remove stale food and husks from the area
- Don't leave waste on the floor to attract rats & mice



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[www.noahs-cupboard.co.uk](http://www.noahs-cupboard.co.uk)

## Health products for wild birds and mammals

Vetark Professional was founded in 1987 by veterinarian Peter Scott FRCVS who still formulates products. Peter is an RCVS recognised Specialist in Zoo & Wildlife Medicine.

Vetark is pleased to support:  
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
[www.hwt.org.uk](http://www.hwt.org.uk)



Hampshire Bat Group  
[www.hants.gov.uk/bats/](http://www.hants.gov.uk/bats/)



The Wildlife Veterinary Investigation Centre:  
[www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/projects/vic/index.htm](http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/projects/vic/index.htm)



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