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My journey to Germany this winter of 2011 - January 5 thru the 14th, provided me with a rare opportunity to visit with a licensed veterinarian that has dedicated his services exclusively to the caring for pigeons. The doctors' focus was on the early detection and prevention of illnesses and diseases. He believes in a year around good health maintenance plan that includes conditioning and treatment when necessary.

His name is:

Andre Pfützner

He works in the village of:

Schweinitz, Germany – this is a small village about 1.5 hours south of Berlin by vehicle

Servicing the following countries:

Germany, Poland, Austria and the Netherlands

Some discussion with the doctor:

He said that it is recommended that approximately four to six weeks before each breeding season, that the breeder should bring in a couple of birds for an examination. This will provide the breeder with the confidence of proceeding without fear of experiencing any challenging health problems in the coming breeding season. If something is found to be of a concern, then the proper steps can be taken in order to correct the conditions early rather than later.

My observations:

Doctor Andre Pfützner first began by taking the bird in his hands and feeling the body as to determine if the bird offers a healthy balance of weight, muscle and fat. When we opened up some dialog during this procedure I was surprised to learn that: Because it is in the winter time, the birds have gained body fat and now that the breeders will soon be mating and breeding their birds, it is now time to place them on a diet. So about the four to six weeks before mating their birds they will change the feed to a higher protein less fat balanced diet. Claiming that their birds health and reproduction process requires a trimmer and less fat carrying breeding specimen!

Then he began to open the wings in order to view the feather quality, overall development and condition of each feather. He could determine the birds overall health by simply looking at each feather and knowing the rotation they came in during the molting process. And at the stage this bird was impacted by adverse health conditions. It was also an indicator of when the birds health was not at let's say its peak condition. It was very impressive. It would have similarities to you and I looking at a recessive red Silesian Swallow pigeon showing toy stencil. We open the wing and we can see some red feathers in the flights that are marbled with white. The trained eye can tell that this bird was perhaps sick, under nourished, cold, neglected or for some reason just not feeling very well! It can also tell us when it was ill based on the sequence of the feather's coming in during the birds molting cycle. Otherwise we'd be seeing that feather in solid red. But Doctor Andre Pfützner was able to make his accurate evaluation by looking at all colors. He would also look at the way the feather fibers had been developed from the vane of the feather outward.

He would lift the bird to his ear in order to listen to the lungs – hoping to learn more about the birds respiratory condition.

He took swabs by inserting the swab inside the open beak and then deeper into the crop and removed mucus samples. Then he placed them onto a glass plate for a microscope evaluation. The findings were transferred via his lap top computer onto the monitor for all to

view. By doing this, he can immediately identify the health and condition of his patient (the bird). He pointed out the friendly bacteria and how important that something's we are seeing offer positive health benefits to the birds strong immune system. He took a scoping-light and looked inside the birds throat and crop and spent a couple of minutes seriously making his evaluation.

He went on to repeat a similar procedure, but this time he inserted a clean and new swab directly into the anal vent area. Again, similar observations of his findings were viewed on his monitor.

Doctor Andre Pfütznerns' total examination process took him about 15 minutes per bird. His entire evaluation along with recommendations is being recorded by an assistant on her computer in the examining room. At the completion of the office visit, a full page detailed report was printed out and given to the breeder. If there is a need for medication, the prescription is filled and given out right then.

The cost of this examination was in the area of a little less than 100 Euros for three birds. I was pleased to see that my good friend Andreas Reuter was highly praised and complimented by Doctor Andre Pfütznern for having his birds in excellent health. And his recommendations to Andreas were that he should proceed with his plans for breeding without fear of any complications.



