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Effect of Capromorelin on Appetite and Weight Gain of Domestic Pigeons (*Columba livia domestica*)

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Abstract: Weight loss and decreased appetite are commonly encountered sequela of disease and stress in avian patients. However, there is currently minimal information in the veterinary literature regarding appetite stimulation in birds. Capromorelin is a potent agonist of the growth hormone secretagogue receptor and increases food consumption via direct stimulation of the hunger centers of the hypothalamus. It is US Food and Drug Administration approved for use as an appetite stimulant in dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*) and has also been shown to increase food consumption in New Zealand white rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), domestic cats (*Felis catus*), and chickens (*Gallus gallus domesticus*). Twenty adult domestic pigeons (*Columba livia domestica*), housed in groups of 5, were involved in a randomized controlled study to investigate the effect of capromorelin on appetite and weight gain. Each group of pigeons was randomly assigned to receive either oral water (control) or capromorelin (treatment). The birds were individually weighed and given either oral water (control) or capromorelin at 12 mg/kg once daily for the duration of the 6-day study period. Total food consumed was recorded in grams per cage each day, and pigeons given capromorelin consumed 38% more food than those in the control group. Pigeons given capromorelin gained significantly more weight (2.5% gain) over the course of the study period compared with controls (0.7% loss, $P = 0.004$). No adverse side effects were noted in any birds. Capromorelin shows promise as an appetite stimulant in pigeons, and further investigation into its use in other avian species is warranted.