

A host-jumping, genome-splicing, avian virus that humans may have helped along

A paper published in PLOS Biology, “The Extraordinary Evolutionary History of the Reticuloendotheliosis Viruses”, describes a spectacular story of host-jumping, genome splicing and derring-do by a virus that has spread rapidly through bird populations in the last half-century.

In this paper, Anna Maria Niewiadomska and Robert Gifford use what amounts to viral palaeontology to assemble what they rightly call “the extraordinary evolutionary history of the reticuloendothelial virus” (REV). There’s a superb accompanying Primer, “The Mongoose, the Pheasant, the Pox and the Retrovirus”, by Lucie Etienne and Michael Emerman that sets this in the context of other rapidly emerging and host-skipping infections, including those where humans have played an unwitting role.

Read the full, original story here: [A Virus Emerges – with a Human Helping Hand](#)