

DEAD BIRD REPORTING

OPH and DHH no longer test dead birds submitted by the public.

At one time dead bird reporting was a valuable component of West Nile virus surveillance in the state. However, biologists and health officials are now aware of the persistent presence of the disease throughout the region. In general, dead bird reporting is no longer considered a useful means of predicting human cases. Other more effective methods of monitoring the presence of the virus are available to scientists and mosquito control officials, such as monitoring the presence of the virus in mosquitoes themselves.

Avian Influenza and other bird diseases:

Agricultural, wildlife and health officials are presently monitoring death and disease in wild fowl and poultry. Concern for movement of new diseases, such as avian influenza, into our area is presently being addressed by officials in several state and federal agencies.

Please see the following guidelines for public reporting of death in birds. Guidelines are provided for general categories of birds.

Please observe safe-handling guidelines (provided at the end of this section*) when disposing of or collecting dead birds!

REPORTING DEATHS IN WILD BIRDS

(songbirds, blue jays, crows, grackles, pigeons, doves, waterfowl, etc.)

Death of individual birds: If the bird is a blue jay, sparrow, cardinal, crow, or bird of prey (owl, eagle, falcon, kite), call your local mosquito agency (check our website for a listing). If the bird is not one of the species mentioned above, or if mosquito control is not available in your community, there is **no need to report**. Please dispose of the bird in the safe manner described at the end of the document.

Death of numerous birds in one location: Again if the type of bird involved includes blue jays, sparrows, cardinals, crows, or birds of prey and if a local mosquito control agency is available, please report to your local mosquito control agency. If a local mosquito control agency is not available, or if blue jays, sparrows, cardinals, crows, or birds of prey are not involved, **do not report** to your local mosquito control agency.

Large numbers of dead waterfowl in one location can be reported to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (225-765-2800). Large numbers of dead songbirds, pigeons, or doves can be reported to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Office of Animal Health Services (225-925-3962) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services (225-389-0229). Diagnostic services will be available only if the above agencies determine that testing is indicated.

REPORTING DEATHS IN POULTRY (chickens, turkeys, etc.)

Death of individual birds: Owners of poultry flocks should **NOT** report individual bird deaths to any public entity. Consultation with a local veterinarian is recommended. Diagnostic services (fee for service) are available through the Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (225-578-9777).

Sudden onset of multiple deaths in poultry: Owners of poultry flocks experiencing higher than normal levels of mortality are again advised to consult a local veterinarian. Any veterinarian with a high degree of suspicion for avian influenza, Newcastle disease, or other diseases of agricultural or public health importance is advised to report the suspected disease to the Office of Animal Health Services, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (225-925-3962).

REPORTING DEATHS IN PET BIRDS

(parrots, parakeets, canaries, etc.)

Individual and multiple bird deaths: Consultation with a local veterinarian is recommended. **DO NOT REPORT TO PUBLIC AGENCIES.** Any veterinarian with a high degree of suspicion for psittacosis (*Chlamydophila psittaci*) or other diseases of agricultural or public health importance is advised to report the suspected disease to the Office of Animal Health Services, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (225-925-3962).

SAFE HANDLING GUIDELINES

Members of the public should **not** handle wild animal carcasses unless it is essential to do so. If you must handle dead wild birds, follow the guidance below on safe handling.

Wild birds can carry several diseases that are infectious to people. To minimize the risk of infection, it is important to take simple hygienic precautions when handling the dead birds or any contaminated material.

1. Wear disposable protective gloves when picking up and handling the carcass.
2. Place the carcass in a suitable leak proof plastic bag. Care should be taken not to contaminate the outside of this bag.
3. Seal the bag and place it in a second plastic bag.
4. Remove gloves by turning them inside out and then place them in the second plastic bag or in a separate plastic bag that should be sealed.
5. The second plastic bag should be sealed and remain sealed, without any leakage, for disposal or shipping.
6. If shipping the carcass to a laboratory, wash the outside of the second plastic bag with soap and water or disinfectant.
7. If gloves are not available, a bag can be turned inside out and used as a makeshift glove. When the dead bird has been picked up, the bag can be reverted and sealed. This should then be placed in a second plastic bag, which should be sealed and washed (as above).
8. **Wash your hands, nails and forearms thoroughly with soap and water after handling the carcass. Do not handle any food until this has been done.**

Keep children away from dead bird carcasses.