



The British Columbia Interagency Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Protocol & the 2023 Avian Influenza Surveillance Program

Reports of sick and dead wild birds are of interest to the following government agencies:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service (migratory bird species)
- BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (resident bird species)
- BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food – Animal Health Centre (diagnostic examination)
- BC Centre for Disease Control & Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (detections of West Nile Virus and Avian Influenza)

Disease diagnosis and outbreak investigations are managed collaboratively by these agencies following the BC Interagency Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Plan (WBMIP). For details please consult the full document.

Since 2006 British Columbia has participated in the national Wild Bird Avian Influenza Survey. The BC Wild Bird AI Survey is coordinated by Wildlife Agencies and is summarized below. The BC West Nile Virus Monitoring Program has been discontinued as WNV does not appear to play a major role in bird health in this province.

If you find a dead wild bird – please participate in our monitoring program.

What to report to Wildlife Agencies:

1. Priority is given to reports of 3 or more dead birds (any species) found in the same geographic location.
2. We are also interested in the following individuals of these species:
 - a) Species at risk (<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry.html>)
 - b) Species highly susceptible to Avian Influenza (swans, ducks)
 - c) Raptors (eagles, hawks, owls)
 - d) Water adapted bird species (waterfowl in general, shorebirds, water-associated birds).

Please report the above by calling **1-866-431-BIRD (2473)**. Reports will be recorded, assessed to determine if further investigation is warranted, and if so, guidance will be provided on a case by case basis.

Collection of birds for submission:

All birds must be in good diagnostic condition (limited decomposition or scavenging).

Dead birds must be handled using common sense sanitary precautions to reduce risks to human health.

Carcasses should be handled using a shovel or, if one is not available, disposable gloves or inverted plastic bags, followed by thorough hand-washing with soap and water (20 seconds to remove debris). Avoid contact with feces, blood, body fluids, & sharp parts of the bird. For further information please see websites under Human Health Concerns.

Carcasses should be:

- a) stored in double plastic bags
- b) in bags clearly labeled with an attached tag stating date of death, location & species
- c) kept cool until further instructions are provided by the investigating Wildlife Agency representative.
Freeze only if there will be a delay in transportation.

For further information and contact numbers:

BC Interagency Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Plan – Agency Contacts:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service (Laurie Wilson: 604-862-8817 or Megan Willie 778-847-5807)
- BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (Wildlife Health Lab at 250-751-7246)

National Avian Influenza Survey:

- Information line: 1-866-544-4744
- Website: <http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/>; Avian influenza in wild birds - Canada.ca
- National Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza dashboard: National Avian Influenza - Wild Positives (arcgis.com)

Human Health Concerns:

- BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>
- Your Regional Health Authority: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>
- Health Link BC: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/> or 8-1-1 (toll free in BC) or 604-215-8110
- Government of Canada: Avian influenza in Canada - Canada.ca
- US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/>

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