



Management Brief 05/02/2018

First Responder Information on Bird Flu

Scientific Services

Background and rationale

SANCOB recently provided a brief regards the increased incidents of the H5N8 strain of Avian Influenza (AI), or Bird Flu, in Swift Terns. They are weak, cannot fly and show signs of tremors and seizures or loss of balance and one or both eyes may be cloudy. This is the same strain of the virus that has caused devastating outbreaks in chickens in the Western Cape in 2017. The disease is highly contagious, with no cure. Any birds carrying bird flu can spread the disease to other birds. For this reason SANCCOB will not be admitting them to their facility. Infected birds need to be removed and euthanized. Recent reports of dead penguins and ducks indicate that they may have also be infected.

Steps to take:

1. Confirm species, contact State Vets and Dave Zimmerman or Dr Angela Bruens (Cape, Garden Route, Addo) and SANCOB (Cape, Addo).
2. If it is suspected bird flu, it needs to be taken to a vet who is willing to euthanize it.
3. Ensure that the vet informs the relevant state vets to discuss tests and disposal.
4. Positively identify the species. If you are unsure take photos of the bird. Dead birds should be photographed from above and below with the wings spread out and the spreadsheet completed and submitted to the regional ecologist.
5. If you do transport a bird with suspected bird flu, please practice good biosecurity. Everything that comes into contact with the bird could transmit the virus to another bird. Therefore:
 - i. Wear gloves.
 - ii. Try to use an old box, do not reuse an AI bird's box for other birds. Line the box with newspaper or other disposable bedding rather than towels.
 - iii. All equipment used for an AI bird should be disposed of with the bird. Do not tube suspected birds.
 - iv. Clean hands, clothes and vehicle well afterwards.
6. Inform your regional ecologist of the case.

Vets who can be contacted to help in the various regions:

Addo

- SANParks Veterinarians: Dr Dave Zimmerman (083) 630 4593 [will be on leave from 10th February to 18th March] or Dr Angela Bruens (082) 562 9937 or Dr Danny Govender (084) 505 0844
- Institute for Coastal and Marine Research NMU: Lorien Pichegru (078) 844 3863
- State Veterinarian: Dr Jared Strydom (084) 700 9432
- SANCOB: Stacey (072) 185 0890