

## Avian influenza

Some of you may be aware that there have now been confirmed cases of Avian Flu in England, Wales and Scotland. This includes confirmed.

We are being asked to remain vigilant for dead birds and report these where required. In England, Scotland or Wales please call the DEFRA helpline on 03459 33 55 77 (select option 7). In Northern Ireland the DAERA helpline is 0300 200 7840.

Current advice on the DEFRA/DAERA websites states that they require reports of **any** dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks), gulls or birds of prey. For all other species, please continue to only report if five or more are found in the same place. See DEFRA's website here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu)

Helpline staff will advise on whether or not they wish to collect the birds for further testing, and in the majority of cases we will **not** be required to handle dead birds.

As a reminder, staff/ volunteers are advised to only touch sick or dead birds **if absolutely necessary** and must wear protective gloves if doing so.

If you absolutely have to handle a sick or dead bird then please observe the following:

- **Avoid touching the bird** with your bare hands.
- Wear disposable latex free protective gloves when picking up and handling dead birds. Wellington boots should be worn.
- Place the dead bird in a suitable leak-proof plastic bag. Care should be taken not to contaminate the outside of the bag. Tie the bag and place it in a second plastic bag.
- Remove gloves by turning them inside out and then place them in the second plastic bag.
- If disposable gloves are not available, a plastic bag can be used as a make-shift glove. When the dead bird has been picked up, turn the bag back on itself and tie.
- Hands and forearms should then be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- If the bird is not being sent for testing, dispose of the carcass in the normal household waste. Alternatively, the dead bird can be buried, but not in a plastic bag.
- Wash any clothing that has been in contact with the dead bird using ordinary washing detergent at the temperature normally used for washing the clothing. Clean wellington boots with detergent.
- DO NOT bring dead or sick birds indoors or attempt euthanasia of sick birds

**We advise members of the public not to touch sick or dead wild birds.**

If a visitor to a reserve sees a dead or sick bird they should report it to the reserve visitor centre/staff if possible, or if that is not possible, they should phone the DEFRA (03459 33 55 77) or DAERA (0300 200 7840) helplines. Both staff and visitors should follow normal hygiene procedures of washing hands after visiting the site, and where no hand washing is possible, washing hands on returning home is fine.

**If you find any dead birds on our reserves please could you email me so that we can maintain a central database.** Please include the reserve where they were found, the number and species of birds found, the date reported to DEFRA/DAERA, the action DEFRA/DAERA took (if any), the feedback from DEFRA/DAERA and a DEFRA/DAERA reference number if possible.