

Defra Wild Bird Mortality (unusual mortality events) Survey

Guidelines for reporting unusual mortality events to Defra

Background

These guidelines (and related issues) were discussed at an ad-hoc meeting of the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens on 28 November 2005. Further details of this meeting may be found at:

www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/acdp/publications.htm#acpd

Who these guidelines are for

Members of the public should **not** handle wild animal carcasses unless it is essential to do so. If you have to handle dead wild birds, follow the guidance below on safe handling. If you have received instruction on handling carcasses or live animals as part of your job or pastime activities and you have suitable equipment readily available (bags, gloves and washing facilities), you may wish to do so on a voluntary basis having discussed the issue with Defra officials. If so you should follow the guidance below on handling dead birds.

Reasons for the survey

Defra are interested in monitoring unusual mortality events or 'die-off' in wild birds (unusually high mortality in wild birds in relation to the population size in the area concerned). A number of factors may be responsible for causing a die-off including infectious diseases, adverse weather conditions, poisoning, predation and starvation. This survey is particularly concerned with infectious diseases. The survey has been in operation since 1998, but has been amended recently to take account of the increased risk of importation of avian influenza into GB in wild birds.

What to do if you come across a multiple die-off

If you think you have come across an unusual mortality event in wild birds, please contact the Defra helpline 08459 33 55 77. The helpline will take details and if the incident fits with the survey requirements will pass you on to the nearest Veterinary Laboratory Agencies (VLA) Regional Laboratory in England and Wales or the nearest Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Laboratory in Scotland during normal office hours. At other times you will be passed to the State Veterinary Service. A list of VLA and SAC laboratories is provided below.

When contacting the Defra Helpline please have as much information to hand as possible so that an initial assessment of the die-off can be made.

If you are passed on to a veterinary laboratory, they will decide whether examination of the carcasses described is required and how they will be collected whether collection of the carcasses by a representative from the

Rural Development Service (RDS), State Veterinary Service (SVS) is required.

Important guidance for handling dead wild birds

You may prefer to take the carcasses to the nearest laboratory yourself. In this case you should indicate this to the laboratory representative. You **must** follow the general guidelines below in order to minimise the risk of infection.

Wild birds can carry several diseases that are infectious to people. To minimise 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 (not latex).
2. Place the carcass in a suitable leak proof plastic bag, and 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 the journey to the VLA RL.
6. 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 and do not to handle any food until this has been done.**

Carcasses should be double bagged in sealed waterproof plastic bags for transporting and the basic hygiene precautions set out below should be followed.

If there is obvious soiling of clothing, this should be physically cleaned and washed with soap and water.

To avoid contamination of any vehicle used, it is recommended that the bagged carcass is also placed on a plastic sheet.

Any contamination of your vehicle should be cleaned with soap or disinfectant.

DO NOT place dead bird carcasses in the freezer.

DO NOT leave dead bird carcasses lying around.

Keep children away from dead bird carcasses.

The laboratory will dispose of any contaminated materials.

You will not be charged any laboratory fees.

The examination may include a post mortem examination and where appropriate samples will be sent for further tests. The aim is to find the cause of the death. Sometimes it is not possible to find the exact cause of death and it is common to suggest a number of causes, these are called differential diagnoses.

The person or organisation submitting the carcasses will be informed of positive results.

CONTACT DETAILS

DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS

ENGLAND AND WALES: VLA REGIONAL LABORATORIES

VLA Aberystwyth Y Buarth, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1ND Tel: 01970 61374	VLA Penrith Merrythought, Calthwaite, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 9RR Tel: 01768 885295
VLA Bury St Edmunds Rougham Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2RX 01284 724499	VLA Preston Barton Hall, Garstang Road, Barton, Preston, Lancs PR3 5HE Tel: 01772 861611
VLA Carmarthen Job's Well Road, Johnstown, Carmarthen, SA31 3EZ Tel: 01267 235244	VLA Shrewsbury Kendal Road, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 4HD Tel: 01743 467621
VLA Langford Langford House, Langford, Bristol BS40 5DX Tel: 01934 852421	VLA Starcross Staplake Mount, Starcross, Exeter, Devon EX6 8PE Tel: 01626 891121
VLA Luddington Luddington, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9SJ Tel: 01789 750212	VLA Sutton Bonington The Elms, College Road, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough, Leics LE12 5RB Tel: 01509 672332
VLA Newcastle Whitley Road, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 9SE Tel 0191 266 2292	VLA Thirsk West House, Station Road, Thirsk, N. Yorkshire YO7 1PZ Tel: 01845 522065
VLA Winchester Itchen Abbas, Winchester, Hants SO21 1BX Tel: 01962 779966	VLA Truro Polwhele, Truro, Cornwall TR4 9AD Tel: 01872 272150

SCOTLAND: SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE (SAC) VETERINARY SERVICE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE CENTRES

1. Edinburgh SAC Veterinary Services, Allan Watt Building Bush Estate, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 0QE Tel: 0131 535 3139	5. Dumfries SAC Veterinary Services, St Mary's Industrial Estate Dumfries, DG1 1DX Tel: 01387 267260
--	--

<p>2. Perth SAC Veterinary Services, 5, Bertha Park View Perth, PH1 3FZ Tel:01738 629167</p>	<p>6. Aberdeen SAC Veterinary Services, Mill of Craibstone, Bucksburn, Aberdeen, AB2 9TS Tel: 01224 711177</p>
<p>3. St Boswells SAC Veterinary Services, Greycrook, St Boswells, TD6 0EU Tel: 01835 822456</p>	<p>7. Inverness SAC Veterinary Services, Drummondhill, Stratherrick Road, Inverness, IV2 4JZ Tel: 01463 243030</p>
<p>4. Ayr SAC Veterinary Services, Auchincruive, Ayr, KA6 5AE Tel: 01292 520318</p>	<p>8. Thurso SAC Veterinary Services, Janetstown, Thurso KW14 7XF Tel: 01847 892602</p>

OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS

<p>Ayr Russell House, King Street, Ayr KA8 OBE Telephone: 01292 268525</p>	<p>Leeds Veterinary Service, Government Buildings, Otley Road, Leeds LS16 5PZ Telephone: 0113 230 0100</p>
<p>Bury St Edmunds Southgate, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2BD Telephone: 01284 778150</p>	<p>Leicester Saffron House, Tigers Road, Wigston, Leicester LE18 4UY Telephone: 0116 2787451</p>
<p>Caernarfon North Wales Animal Health Division, Crown Building, Penrallt, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1EP Telephone: 01286 674144</p>	<p>Lincoln Ceres House, No 2 Searby Road, Lincoln LN2 4DT Telephone: 01522 529951</p>
<p>Cardiff Animal Health Unit, Government Buildings, 66 Ty Glas Road, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5ZB Telephone: 029 20 768500</p>	<p>Newcastle upon Tyne The Quadrant, Newburn Riverside, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 8NZ Telephone: 0191 2295400</p>
<p>Carlisle Animal Health Division, Hadrian House, Wavell Dr. Rosehill Industrial Est, Carlisle CA1 2TB Telephone: 01228 591999</p>	<p>Perth Animal Health Divisional Office, Central Scotland, SEERAD, Strathearn House, Broxden Business Park, Lamberkine Drive, Perth PH1 1RX Telephone: 01738 602211</p>
<p>Carmarthen Government Buildings, Picton Terrace, Carmarthen SA31 3BT Telephone: 01267 225300</p>	<p>Preston Barton Hall Garstang Road, Barton, Preston PR3 5HE Telephone: 01772 861144</p>
<p>Chelmsford Animal Health Division, Beeches Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2RU Telephone: 01245 358383</p>	<p>Reading Animal Health, Divisional Office, Coley Park, Reading RG1 6LY Telephone: 0118 9596695</p>
<p>Exeter Animal Health Division, Clyst House, Winslade Park, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, Devon EX5 1DY Telephone: 01392 266373</p>	<p>Reigate Liberty House, 105 Bell Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 7JB Telephone: 01737 242242</p>
<p>Galashiels Cotgreen Road, Tweedbank, Galashiels TD1 3SG Telephone: 01896 758806</p>	<p>Stafford State Veterinary Service, Beacon House, Staffordshire Technology Park, Dyson Way, Stafford ST18 0AR Telephone: 01785 231900</p>
<p>Gloucester</p>	<p>Taunton</p>

Defra Animal Health Divisional Office, Saw Mills End, Corinium Avenue, Gloucester GL4 3DE Telephone: 01452 627400	Third, fourth and Fifth Floors, Quantock House, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3NX Telephone 01823 337922
Inverness Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness IV1 1SF Telephone: 01463 253098	Truro Animal Health Division, Pydar House, Pydar Street, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 2XD Telephone: 01872 265500
Inverurie Thainstone Court, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5YA Telephone: 01467 626300	Worcester <u>Block G, Government Buildings,</u> <u>Whittington Road, Worcester WR5</u> <u>2LQ</u> Telephone: 01905 767111

Veterinary Exotic Diseases Division, 11th October 2005