

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

2006 COLORADO AVIAN DISEASE SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOL

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Background

Coordinated avian disease surveillance in Colorado has been identified as a critical function for federal, state and local agencies responsible for monitoring and protecting veterinary and human health. Rapid and effective response to threats from West Nile and avian influenza viruses require that veterinary and human public health agencies establish effective communications and understand each agency's responsibilities and authorities. Because interests in avian disease surveillance overlap many agencies, the Colorado Avian Disease Surveillance Program (CADSP), a consortium including the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), Colorado State University-Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (CSU-VDL), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), has developed this surveillance protocol for avian disease.

CoHELP Line for Public Information

The protocol has been designed with guidance from the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center (RMPDC) to efficiently capture and analyze data and to rapidly disseminate public information on bird health and disease. The Colorado Health Emergency Line for the Public ("CoHELP") operated by the RMPDC will be the primary information collection and dissemination source for the general public on avian diseases. CoHELP staff respond to hotline calls 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM Monday through Friday, and 9:30 AM to 8:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. The CoHELP hotline phone number is 1-877-462-2911. CoHELP data will be provided via the CADSP to all response agencies.

Algorithm for Triaging Calls and Collecting Data

For each caller with (a) question(s) about bird health or dead bird(s), hotline staff will collect pertinent data including location and type of bird(s). Hotline staff will answer questions and concerns from callers using "frequently asked question scripts" (FAQs) written by Colorado avian and wildlife disease veterinarians from the CDA, CSU and CDOW, and public health information from CDPHE. After triaging each call, hotline staff will provide the caller with followup assistance depending on the nature of the call and the health issue:

- Callers requesting further assistance or information about *owned or domestic birds* will be directed to the CSU-VDL avian disease diagnostic veterinarian at 970-297-1281.
- Callers requesting further assistance or information about *wild birds* will be further queried about species and numbers of birds affected:
 - If the type of bird is a *corvid* (crow, raven, magpie, jay), hotline staff will follow the CDPHE Zoonosis Program's "*West Nile Virus Surveillance Guidelines for the Submission of Dead Bird Specimens*" (see link below) and direct callers to their local or regional public health agency. WNV surveillance guidelines were established in 2003 and remain unchanged for 2006. Local/regional health agencies will make further determinations about WNV testing and specimen collection depending on local outbreaks and surveillance needs.
 - If the type of bird is a songbird, hotline staff will follow the "*Songbird Algorithm*" section, and collect further information about the number of affected birds. If there are 1-2 dead songbirds,

- callers will be advised of proper disposal practices. If there are 3 or more dead birds, callers will be directed to their CDOW Regional Office or Service Center for followup.
- If the bird is a raptor, gamebird, shorebird or type of waterfowl, hotline staff will collect information on the number of dead/affected birds and direct callers to their CDOW Regional Office or Service Center for followup.

Veterinary and Public Health Response

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is the response agency for all wild bird health and disease issues in the state. Decisions regarding specimen collection, testing and response will be made by the CDOW Regional Offices and wildlife veterinarians, in consideration of the information provided by the caller; known health conditions, diseases and/or outbreaks among wild bird populations; and other local or environmental conditions.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is the response agency for all owned and domestic bird health issues in the state. The Colorado State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory is the United States Department of Agriculture approved laboratory for avian influenza testing for the state and region. CSU-VDL and CDA actively educate and engage owners of pet birds and poultry (whether commercial or non-commercial) to maintain biosecurity practices for the protection of all birds and people who live or work with birds. Veterinarians from the CSU-VDL and CDA respond to all calls from bird owners for assistance with bird health issues.

Further Information and Resources

- CDPHE West Nile Surveillance Guidelines
www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Zoonosis/wnv/Dead_Bird_Submission_2003.pdf
- USDA Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) Biosecurity Information
www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity/
- Colorado Department of Agriculture: www.ag.state.co.us
- Colorado Division of Wildlife: wildlife.state.co.us
- Colorado Avian Disease Surveillance Program website: www.coloradobirdhealth.org

For information regarding this surveillance protocol, please contact

- Dr. Kristy Pabilonia, CSU, 970-297-1281, regarding domestic birds and poultry,
- Dr. Laurie Baeten, CDOW, 970-416-1516, regarding wild birds,
- John Pape, CDPHE, 303-692-2700, regarding corvids and WNV, and
- Dr. Kathe Bjork, 303-692-2669, CDPHE Emergency Preparedness Section