

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**  
**KSU Veterinary Health Center/Exotics Zoological Medicine Service**  
**December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Due to the highly contagious nature of HPAI, the VHC is implementing strict precautions to reduce the risk of exposure of hospital patients to this virus. The Exotics Zoological Medicine Service will receive poultry and avian wildlife species (especially ducks, geese, swans, crows/blue jays, and raptors) on a case by case basis. The EZMS will evaluate these animals, ensuring that the approval of a senior clinician or intern is obtained before proceeding with their care. It is essential to give particular attention to the clinical signs listed below.

**Basic Infection Control-Hand Hygiene:**

- Any employee that is interacting with an avian species should have strict adherence to and proper use of hand hygiene after contact with any bird species. Hand hygiene should consist of washing with soap and water for 10-15 seconds or the use of other standard hand disinfection procedures. This will happen before all breaks (especially where smoking or snacking will occur), before lunch/bathroom breaks, and prior to leaving.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

- Recommended PPE includes: properly-fitted safety goggles, disposable gloves, KN95 face mask, and a disposable gown.

**Avian Influenza Symptoms:**

- Chickens:
  - Sudden death, lethargy/depression, swollen or discolored comb, wattle, or legs, diarrhea, decreased egg production, soft or misshapen eggs, coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, incoordination, or ataxia.
- Other birds:
  - Swollen head
  - Blue discoloration and swelling of the neck and throat
  - Blood-tinged oral and nasal discharge
  - Respiratory distress (gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling, rattling)
  - Greenish diarrhea
  - Bruising of the skin (due to hemorrhages)
  - Severe lethargy
  - Neurologic signs
    - Torticollis (twisted neck)
    - Opisthotonos (backward-arching head)
    - Incoordination
    - Paralysis
    - Drooping wings

**VHC Processes:**

#### Client-owned poultry:

- Any call regarding client-owned chickens, geese, ducks, or other birds housed outdoors should be referred directly to the EZMS for screening.
- Any “outdoor bird” that is housed in a county that has been directly affected by HPAI within 60 days will not be admitted to the VHC at this time.
- Clients should be asked the following screening questions prior to be admitted in the hospital or bringing the bird inside the building:
  - Reason for visit?
  - Are birds housed indoors or outdoors?
  - Have you had contact with other birds outside the household?
  - Have you had other birds dying suddenly or with any of the previous clinical signs?
  - Does your bird have contact with wild birds?
  - Have there been dead wild birds on your property, neighborhood, or area?
  - Are there any humans in the household showing signs of a cold/flu?
  - Does your bird have any of the previously listed clinical signs?
- **Owners will be advised to remain in their car with their animal when they arrive.** They will need to call the front desk to let them know they have arrived. The desk staff will communicate their arrival with the EZMS. A member of the EZMS will direct the client to park in the rear of the building. Patients will be brought in through the garage door at the end of Tier 3 (Large Animal).
- All poultry patients should be offered AI testing. If the animal is exhibiting any clinical signs of HPAI, testing may be required per the attending clinician’s recommendations.
- These cases will all be treated as infectious, so full PPE (or partial PPE depending on the circumstances) will be required at all times when handling these animals. A service member will retrieve the animal from the client’s vehicle and transport it directly to our designated quarantine/HPAI room (J183). All exams, treatments, etc., will need to be completed within this room. If the animal will need to be hospitalized they are required to remain in this room until HPAI PCR results are received.
- PPE should be removed upon exiting the room and personal hygiene practices should be adhered to.

**For any sick/dead domesticated bird suspected to have HPAI, including backyard fowl, domesticated (fed) city park ducks/birds, and pet birds, please contact the KDA to discuss how they want to evaluate the case. The KDA phone number is 785-564-6602.**

#### Wildlife:

- Passeriformes (songbirds), and Columbiformes (pigeons/doves) will be received as normal. These species are low-risk for HPAI and therefore will not need to go through a quarantine process.
- When receiving calls from good Samaritans regarding sick or injured waterfowl or raptors, similar screening questions should be asked. If the animal is exhibiting signs of HPAI, the good Samaritan should be advised to leave the animal where it was found. In cases where leaving wildlife would be a danger to people or create a nuisance, the game warden with responsibilities

in that county should be notified. Game warden phone numbers are listed in the current KDWP Hunting Regulations Summary. The phone number can also be found at <https://ksoutdoors.com/Services/Publications>. Be sure to have the exact location, species, and description of the problem ready to relay to the game warden.

- If the EZMS approves receiving the bird, the same receiving/PPE protocols should be followed. Good Sam's should be advised to keep the animal in their car until the exotics service is able to retrieve it. All animals will be examined, treated, and housed, within the quarantine/HPAI room (J183).
- If a **good Samaritan shows up** to the hospital with a wild bird in hand, they should be advised to keep the animal in their vehicle until the exotics service can be contacted.

**Community members with concerns about animals potentially infected with HPAI should contact Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks at 620-342-0658.**

**In events involving bald eagles, large die-offs of waterfowl, other large die-offs, the EZMS may contact Shane Hesting, the Wildlife Disease Program Coordinate for KDWP, at 620-450-8122. This phone number should NOT be given out to the general public.**

Overnight/Emergency:

- All calls regarding poultry, wild waterfowl, corvids, and raptors, should be referred to the emergency service. Emergency staff should ask the appropriate screening questions. If the animal does not need to be seen right away the owner should be advised to call the EZMS during normal business hours.
- The client can be advised that keeping the bird in a cool, dark, cardboard box overnight is a safe way to contain the wild bird until normal business hours resume. They should not attempt to provide food, water, or medical care to the animal prior to a consultation with the EZMS intern or corresponding faculty member.
- If the patient is having HPAI symptoms, but needs to be seen right away, the on-call exotics intern will need to be contacted to receive the patient.