

Guidelines relating to Avian Influenza issued from time to time by the Ministry of Environment & Forests

Personal Care:-

1. Wear rubber gloves and protective clothing that can be disinfected or disposed of and protective eyewear or a face shield while handling animals.
2. Wash hands with soap and water often and disinfect works surfaces and equipment between sites.
3. Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.
4. Minimize exposure to mucosal membranes by wearing protective eyewear (goggles)
5. The influenza virus is sensitive to many common disinfectants such as detergents, 10% household bleach, alcohol and other commercial disinfectants. The virus is much more difficult to inactivate if it is encrusted in organic material such as feces or soil.
6. Take an influenza antiviral drug daily for the entire time you are in direct contact with infected birds or a contaminated environment.

Symptoms:-

Affected birds display symptoms such as Tremors, Diarrhoea, Head Tilt and Paralysis. The disease spreads quickly causing Paralysis and Staggering. The virus is transmitted between affected poultry and recently from poultry to wild birds and vice-a-versa.

Birds Care:

1. It should be ensured that wild birds are not harmed during trapping and collection of serum samples.
2. Preference should be given to the leg vein instead of the wing vein. Wing vein blood collection is reported to result in haemorrhage affecting normal flight, making them susceptible to predators.
3. All wild bird samples are valuable and hence all collection of samples, packing and transport should be done in collaboration with trained animal husbandry/veterinary staff. This is VERY IMPORTANT.
4. Awareness should be spread that any sighting of a dead bird by volunteers, bird watchers, etc. should be reported to the nearest forest/animal husbandry office.

Monitoring of migratory birds:-

1. A State level monitoring committee to be constituted.
2. An action plan to be prepared for monitoring of the migratory birds and dealing with any arising emergency.
3. Collaborate with the State Veterinary Departments in collection of samples of migratory birds and to keep proper vigil. Dead birds should be handled with utmost caution and scientific supervision.
4. Surveillance should not be restricted to the Protected Areas alone, but to all such wetlands and habitats that provide staging grounds to the migrating birds and to areas where there is a possibility of interaction of migratory birds and poultry, more so in backyard poultry.
5. Depute suitable staff/officers to attend the training being organized by the Department of Animal Husbandry on sampling techniques, etc in various regions of the country, as being informed from time to time.
6. All deaths of migratory birds, whatever be the number and cause, **SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE CELL CREATED IN THE MINISTRY IMMEDIATELY**. The local veterinary department should be contacted immediately for collection and dispatch of samples, as per procedure, for testing. The report of the testing be sent to MoEF immediately.
7. Press reports be given judiciously to prevent undue panic and which may lead to unwarranted killing of migratory birds.
8. Intensive surveillance should be undertaken to look for any unreasonable bird behaviors or death amongst wild birds as well as migratory birds.
9. Vigilance should be stepped up in the Zoos also.

Weekly report to the Ministry

1. Important sites, both within and outside PAs which are being visited by migratory birds this year.
2. Number and species of birds arrived.
3. Approximate period of arrival and stay.
4. Any changes in migratory pattern regarding number, arrival sites, etc as compared to previous years.
5. States/UTs should be very particular in informing Ministry by fax, telephone, email immediately since it has been the experience that information is received from other sources, rather than from the Forest Department.