



Photo: DWR, Jim Shuler

## Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah's Response to the Avian Influenza in Utah (UPDATED Aug 2022)

The highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) or “bird flu” is spreading across the country and as of April 2022 is now in Utah. There have been many reports of millions of Utah chickens and turkeys having to be “depopulated” (the official word for killed) as well as an infected zoo bird, some small backyard flocks and numerous wild birds (mostly geese, ducks and raptors) throughout the state.

This avian flu is believed to have been brought in by the migrating wild flocks and the last major outbreak was back in 2014/15. The last outbreak missed us, but Utah will not escape it this round.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah stands on the front lines with state and federal agencies as well as our many rehabilitation peers across Utah and country to keep this virus from spreading.

We are working with state agencies and following the guidelines that they have given us in order to keep our doors open and treat the patients we are able. Some of these guidelines are listed below in hopes that you may understand the reason we have had to make this decision.

- **Each animal that comes through our facility must be quarantined for 30 days.**
- **At minimum they must have a PCR test upon admission and another before release.**
- **Staff handling quarantined animals and new intakes must be in full PPE gear.**
- **Our building must be completely closed to the public.**

In order to save the animals that we can, until the situation changes, we will not be able to accept certain species of birds.

### \*\*\* We are not able to accept Waterfowl or Shorebirds \*\*\*

This group is in the high-risk category and we are unable to provide a proper quarantine for them, especially with the sheer quantity that we normally receive each season (~2,500-3,000 patients May-Sep). Be advised that other species may be added to this list as we continue to monitor the situation.

WRCNU cannot afford to be shut down by this virus and we MUST keep the patients and our Education animals, who are already in our care, safe.

We fully expect the general public to be upset, frustrated and angry about their loss of options regarding sick, injured and orphaned wild birds and we completely understand and empathize, but there are no good options and preventing the spread of this virus to other avian species is of the highest importance.

**We ask that before you engage in the rescue of any bird (or other animals as well) that you contact WRCNU at 801-814-7888.**

(Continued on next page)

## (Avian Influenza Response Cont.)

However, we do understand that there are situations where that is not possible. If that is the case, we ask that you use the following procedure to bring animals in to us:

- **PLEASE CALL FIRST** to set up your appointment: our phones will be on from 10a-6p daily
- **We will be accepting animals between 10:00am – 6:00pm daily.**
- You need to call in advance to pre-register; at that time we will provide a case number to check the animal in with.
- The animals must be brought in a clean cardboard box that is closed and secured.  
*The box cannot have held any other animals prior.*
- Please pull up to the curb in front of the building where you will be met by our personnel.
- It will be very important that we collect the exact location that the animal was picked up from as well as the finder's name, address, and phone number.
  - This information will be used in the case we receive positive HPAI results that must be reported to the state.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Before picking up ANY bird(s) you suspect might need help, call us.

We can prevent many unnecessary patients if we can just leave the healthy babies alone—every year we receive literally hundreds of HEALTHY baby birds and their only “injury” is they were removed from their parents and orphaned by caring and concerned individuals. Just keep children and pets away and let the mom & dad birds do their work teaching their young how to hide and find food. It takes several days/ weeks for young birds to become good flyers. Please let them learn and practice under the expert coaching of their parents.

Please share this information widely.

Sincerely,

DaLyn Marthaler  
Executive Director / Wildlife Specialist  
Wildlife Rehabilitation Center  
of Northern Utah

