The British Columbia Interagency Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Protocol & the 2007 Avian Influenza and West Nile Virus Surveys

Reports of sick and dead wild birds are of interest to the following government agencies:
- Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service (migratory bird species)
- BC Ministry of Environment (resident bird species)
- BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands – Animal Health Centre (diagnostic examination)
- BC Centre for Disease Control and Regional Health Authorities (corvids for WNV surveillance)

Disease diagnosis and outbreak investigations are managed collaboratively by these agencies following the BC Interagency Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Plan (WBMIP). For details please consult the full document.

In 2007, two national surveys are being conducted to monitor for the potential presence of two types of viruses in wild bird populations, Avian Influenza (AI) & West Nile Virus (WNV). The BC Wild Bird AI Survey is coordinated by Wildlife Agencies and is summarized below. The BC West Nile Virus Monitoring Program is coordinated by the BC Centre for Disease Control and the Regional Health Authorities, further details about this program are available at the BCCDC website (http://www.bccdc.org/topic_index.php).

If you find a dead wild bird – please participate in our monitoring program.

Guidelines for reporting dead wild birds to Government Agencies

What to report to Wildlife Agencies:
1. Groups of 3 or more dead birds (any species) found in the same geographic location.
2. The following individual dead birds:
   a) Species at risk (list on http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/default_e.cfm)
   b) Highly susceptible species (swans, ducks)
   c) Raptors (eagles, hawks, owls)
   d) Water adapted bird species (waterfowl in general, shorebirds, water-associated birds).

These wild bird mortalities should be reported by calling **1-866-431-BIRD (2473)**. Reports will be recorded, assessed to determine if further investigation is warranted, and if so, guidance will be provided on a case by case basis.

What to report to Public Health Agencies:
Individual dead corvids (crows, jays, ravens, magpies) should be reported directly to your Regional Health Authority for West Nile Virus Surveillance (see your telephone blue pages or report on-line http://westnile.bccdc.org/)

Collection of birds for submission:
All birds must be in good diagnostic condition (limited decomposition or scavenging).

Dead birds must be handled using common sense sanitary precautions to reduce risks to human health. Carcasses should be handled using a shovel or, if one is not available, disposable gloves or inverted plastic bags, followed by thorough hand-washing with soap and water (20 seconds to remove debris). Avoid contact with feces, blood, body fluids, & sharp parts of the bird. For further information please see websites under Human Health Concerns.

Carcasses should be:
a) stored in double plastic bags
b) in bags clearly labeled with an attached tag stating date of death, location & species
c) kept cool until further instructions are provided by the investigating Wildlife Agency representative.

For further information and contact numbers

BC Interagency Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Plan – Agency Contacts:
- Environment Canada-Canadian Wildlife Services (Laurie Wilson: 604-940-4679)
- BC Ministry of Environment-Ecosystems Branch (Dr. Helen Schwantje: 250-953-4285)
- BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands-Animal Health Centre (Dr. Vicki Bowes: 1-800-661-9903)

2007 National Avian Influenza Survey:
- Information line: 1-866-544-4744
- Website: http://wildlife1.usask.ca/

Human Health Concerns:
- BC Centre for Disease Control: http://www.bccdc.org/
- Your Regional Health Authority
- BC NurseLine 1-866-889-4700 or 604-215-4700 in Greater Vancouver
- Public Health Agency of Canada: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/avian_e.html
- US Centre for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

1-866-431-BIRD (2473)