

Avian flu in Crawley

Following reports of dead birds at the Millpond, these were collected and submitted to DEFRA for investigation.

One of the birds was confirmed to have died from a variant that is of a low risk of transmission to humans.

DEFRA guidance is:

How avian influenza is spread

Avian influenza spreads from bird to bird by direct contact or through contaminated body fluids and faeces. It can also be spread by contaminated feed and water or by dirty vehicles, clothing and footwear.

The avian influenza virus changes frequently, creating new strains, and there is a constant risk that one of the new strains may spread easily among people.

Avian influenza isn't an airborne virus.

Wild birds

If a member of the public finds dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, they should report them to the DEFRA helpline on 03459 33 55 77. **They should not touch or pick up** any dead or visibly sick birds that are found. For further information see DEFRA's [advice to the public](#).

This is the first step in all cases. However, it is expected that DEFRA will eventually defer the collection on **public land** to the local authority and steps are in place to ensure that this is carried out safely to protect the public and our staff.

If a dead wild bird is found on domestic premises the council is not responsible for collection or disposal. DEFRA's guidance is:

Disposal of dead wild birds found at domestic premises

After contacting the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77) to report the dead wild birds, if the birds are not required for surveillance purposes, follow the advice below for their disposal.

Disposal in household or municipal waste refuse:

If possible, wear disposable protective gloves when picking up and handling dead wild birds (if disposable gloves are not available, a plastic bag can be used as a makeshift glove). When the dead wild bird has been picked up, the bag can be turned back on itself and tied. It should then be placed in a second plastic bag, tied and disposed of in the normal household waste (lidded bin outside).

Place the dead wild bird in a suitable plastic bag, preferably leak proof. Care should be taken not to contaminate the outside of the bag. Tie the bag and place it in a second plastic bag.

Remove gloves by turning them inside out and then place them in the second plastic bag. Tie the bag and dispose of it in the normal household refuse bin.

Burial:

The dead wild bird can be buried, but not in a plastic bag. The depth of the burial hole must be sufficient to prevent animals scavenging and gaining access to it – at least 60cm deep is advised.

Location must not be near any watercourses or likely to contaminate local water supplies.

If staff at DEFRA direct callers to us as the local authority then they can be reported using the online report a problem page at [crawley.gov.uk/tellus](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/tellus) for wild birds on public land. This will be the preferred reporting system so that the data can be monitored.

The council will support DEFRA in dealing with this issue to keep everybody safe and additional updates will follow in line with guidance from DEFRA.

The Communications Team will be sending out a public announcement and signage will be installed around water areas to inform the public of the procedures to follow.

I will keep members up to date with any further information when it becomes available.

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