



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WATER AND LAND REFORM

Tel.: (+264-61) 2087503
Enquiries: Dr. E Hikufe
Email: Emmanuel.Hikufe@mawlr.gov.na

Directorate of Veterinary Services
Private Bag 12022
WINDHOEK

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Veterinary Public Notification No. 1/2022

**SUSPECTED OUTBREAK OF HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA IN WILD BIRDS
ALONG THE COASTAL LINE OF WALVIS BAY, ERONGO REGION, NAMIBIA**

(Issued in terms of the Animal Health Act 2011 (Act No. 1 of 2011))

The Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform hereby informs the farmers and the general public about a suspected outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in wild birds occurring along the coastal line of Walvis Bay in Erongo region. On 13th January 2022 DVS Walvis Bay received a report about a number of dead wild birds specifically Cape Cormorants and Pelicans on Bird Island and in areas around Salt Company.

Since the 14th January 2022, DVS Officials have been carrying out disease outbreak investigations around the affected areas and found two (2) dead Pelicans and recorded over two hundred (200) Cape cormorants deaths. Live sick birds were also observed showing clinical signs such as tremors/shivering, staggering movements and swollen heads. Some sick birds showed signs of tameness and reluctance to flee from humans. Samples were collected and sent to Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) for confirmation and the results are pending. The source of the infection is suspected to be due to the wild migratory birds.

Avian Influenza is an infectious disease of birds caused by type A strains of the influenza virus which occurs worldwide. All birds are thought to be susceptible to infection with Avian Influenza, though some species are more resistant to infection than others. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza is characterised by the sudden onset, severe illness, and rapid death, with a mortality rate that can approach 100%.

Avian Influenza (AI) clinical signs in Birds include: swelling and purple discolouration of the head, comb and wattle, swelling and red discolouration of the feet, bleeding of internal organs and muscles, greenish diarrhoea, twisting of the neck, staggering movement and paralysis of wings and legs.

Wild birds play a major role in the maintenance and spread of Avian Influenza viruses. Infected birds/poultry can shed avian influenza A viruses in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces.

Susceptible birds become infected when they have contact with the virus as it is shed by infected birds. Domesticated birds (chickens, turkeys, etc.) may become infected through direct contact with infected wild birds, other infected poultry, or through contact with surfaces that have been contaminated with the viruses.

Humans may be infected by AI

Some Avian Influenza strains may infect humans (zoonotic strains). Humans can be infected with the virus via the eyes, nose and mouth when handling and coming into close contact with infected poultry/birds, and/or through the handling and consumption of infected products. Further Investigations are underway aimed at establishing whether the suspected HPAI virus strain is zoonotic (if it can infect humans).

The Directorate of Veterinary Services hereby announces the following precautionary measures:

- Farmers and the General public should immediately report any suspicion of any sick or dead domestic or wild birds along the entire Namibian Coastal Line to the nearest State Veterinary Office or other relevant government officials;
- The general public is cautioned not to handle the sick birds and birds that are found dead neither consume their products,
- Disposal of dead birds should be done under supervision of Veterinary and Health officials;
- Movement of live birds (domestic and wild birds) from coastal areas of Erongo region is prohibited with immediate effect;

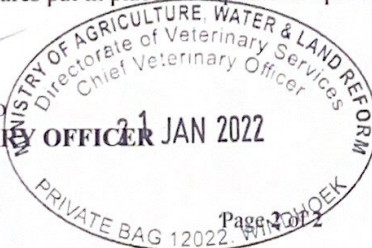
Other biosecurity measures are as follows:

- Poultry farmers should keep their poultry away from areas frequented by wild birds;
- Do not keep on the premises elements that may attract wild birds, including poultry feed products placed outside the building;
- Maintain strict control over access to flocks by vehicles, people and equipment;
- Ensure the sanitation of property, poultry houses and equipment;
- Avoid the introduction of birds of unknown disease status into the flock;
- Ensure appropriate disposal of manure, litter and dead poultry;
- **Vaccination and treatment of sick birds due to Avian Influenza is prohibited in Namibia**

For more information please contact the nearest State Veterinary Office or the following officials: and Dr E Hikufe – 0811343386 and Dr NN Haindongo – 0811447626.

MAWLR would like to urge the general public for their cooperation, support and compliance with the control measures put in place to stop further spread

Dr Albertina Shilongo
CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER



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