

Wildlife Health Surveillance Victoria

December 2014

We investigate reports of sick & dead wildlife from free ranging populations in Victoria to understand baseline wildlife health & detect changes. This is important because wildlife health can affect biodiversity conservation & ecosystem health, biosecurity & the health of domestic animals & people.

Please contact us to report sick and dead wildlife from free ranging populations of endemic mammals birds reptiles and amphibians in Victoria.

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Avian botulism

Weak and dead waterbirds have been found at some wetlands during November 2014. Avian botulism is considered to be the cause. The 'botulism season' in Victoria is just starting and could continue over summer. Please:

- Observe waterbirds carefully and note abnormal behaviour including: weak legs, weak wings, weak neck.
- If affected birds are examined by a Veterinary Practitioner, a blood sample for serum can be collected for testing. (Contact Pam)
- Look carefully for sick and dead pelicans, swans, ibis, ducks, coots etc. (Also dead frogs)
- We will try to test euthanized and freshly dead waterbirds from different locations to determine the cause of death. Deaths can also be due to other infections, algal poisoning, environmental contaminants etc. (Contact Pam)
- Report waterbird deaths to the land owner (local council, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Vic Roads, Department of Environment and Primary Industry, etc).
- Regular collection and proper disposal of carcasses reduces the contamination of the site and may reduce future cases. Signs can inform the community of risks.

Avian botulism is caused by a toxin from a bacteria that can persist in the environment. For more information google: Wildlife Health Australia, fact sheets, Botulism.



Please report dead parrots, cockatoos and lorikeets to investigate their health.

**Please report wildlife morbidity and mortality to Pam Whiteley 0400 119 301
pamw@unimelb.edu.au**

(if Pam is not available phone 97312000 and ask for Dave Hobbs or Histopath)

Samples can be transported overnight to Werribee for testing.

**Wildlife Health Surveillance Victoria, Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences
The University of Melbourne. 250 Princes Highway, Werribee, 3030**

Donations into this project are tax deductible. Please contact Pam.

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