

Avian Influenza Deaths on the Rise in Horseshoe Bay! Avoid All Animal Carcasses!

Recently in the City of Horseshoe Bay, we have been experiencing an unusually high death rate of buzzards due to avian influenza. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, avian influenza, which is caused by influenza type A viruses, is a contagious viral disease that poses a major threat to the poultry industry and animal health, including other wildlife and pets! The disease is highly transmissible and can even affect humans.

The City of Horseshoe Bay urges all residents to avoid the carcasses of not only buzzards, but other wildlife as well. Mammal species are highly susceptible to the virus including domestic cats and dogs, skunks, foxes, raccoons, bobcats, and mountain lions. Please also keep pets away from wildlife carcasses and never allow a pet to consume a carcass.

Should residents encounter dead wildlife, they should contact the Police Department Animal Control office by calling 830.598.2633 to request removal of the carcass. Please never handle an animal carcass on your own!

The City of Horseshoe Bay Utilities Department will be using a propane cannon in the evenings as it becomes dark to ward off buzzards from the utility yard. The cannon will be loud and may sound similar to gunfire. While this may be frightening, it is not a cause for concern and is being done to protect employees from the dangers of the virus.

Signs of infection

There are signs residents can look for in animals that are infected, including neurological disease such as incoordination or stumbling, lethargy, trembling, seizures, lack of fear of people, coughing and sneezing and sudden death. Please be aware, however, that birds infected with avian influenza may not always have outward signs of infection.

The virus may spread in a variety of ways, including through contact with infected wild and domestic birds (including feathers and feces) as well as by contaminated equipment, clothing and shoes of caretakers. If you have contact with an HPAI-positive animal and develop signs of illness, immediately contact your health care provider and let them know about the exposure.

You can read more about the virus by visiting www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/avianflu.