



PRESS RELEASE

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BIRD DEATHS IN LOMPOC MAY BE DUE TO AVIAN PARAMYXOVIRUS

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) -- A number of dead birds found in the area of North P Street in Lompoc are being tested for avian paramyxovirus. This virus can spread rapidly in pigeons and doves and can kill up to 100 percent of pigeons in an area. It is known to cause periodic outbreaks in specific bird populations, causing multiple sick and dead birds at communal feeding/ watering locations or roost sites. This virus **is not** associated with causing disease in humans and it does not generally spread to other bird species.

California Fish and Wildlife has initiated testing of dead birds to determine the cause of the deaths. It may take several weeks before testing results are received.

Avian paramyxovirus can survive for several weeks in the environment and be carried by birds or spread to other birds through a shared food or water source. Birds can die within three days once ill. It is unknown if birds other than doves and pigeons can become infected. Although there is no record of this virus causing disease in mammals (humans, cats, dogs), it is recommended that people not have close, direct contact with infected birds and not allow their pets to come into contact with sick or dead birds.

Residents in the area where dead birds have been found are advised to take the following steps to prevent further transmission:

- Eliminate or drain shared food or water sources for doves and pigeons such as fountains, troughs or bird feeders. A barrier may also be used over large water sources such as a pond.
- Discourage a tree for roosting.
- Dispose of bird carcasses promptly using proper personal protective equipment such as disposable gloves, and wash hands afterwards.
- Those with backyard chickens should not allow wild birds into chicken coops to consume their chickens' food or water.

For more information, contact Nicholas Shirkey at Nicholas.shirkey@wildlife.ca.gov.