

Bird Flu in and around Cape Town – March 2018.

A Cape Bird Club member contacted the Conservation Committee Chairman about 4 doves he found dead on the lawn with no sign of predation. He asked whether deaths could be due to bird flu?

This is a reply from the vet for the City of Cape Town to the question.

“Yes there have been doves that have died of bird flu, so far it was another type to the one affecting the terns. There has also been New Castle disease (pigeon paramyxovirus) that would give very similar presentation. There seems to be lots dying.

Please see the previous correspondence below I have sent out to other queries and the state vet report on disease outbreaks.

Some pigeons have been reported dying in Cape Town, they have been diagnosed with Avian Influenza (but not the H5N8 type that has been identified in seabirds) but Pigeon Paramyxo Virus can also cause similar symptoms.

The diseases have not been shown to be hazardous to people but hygiene and safety measures should still be employed.

The only way of preventing spread of the diseases from a public point of view is to execute hygiene measures when handling these birds – i.e. gloves, wash and disinfect your hands and anything that touched the bird. If a bird needs to be disposed on a private property it might be better to contact your local vet and see if they can assist. The diseases are quite widespread and removing sickly birds is of no use, but is being monitored closely to protect our commercial and endangered bird species.

If a bird is very sick and in need of euthanasia, they must try contacting their local vet and find out if they would be willing to assist and report from their side. There are numerous vets that have offered their assistance around Cape Town.

The City of Cape Town falls within the jurisdiction of the Boland State Veterinary Office where **Dr Gary Buhrmann** and I are the responsible state veterinarians, and can be contacted on the following number to report the deaths: **021 887 0324.**”

Dorothy Breed.