



# NEWS RELEASE

## Media Contacts

**Karen Acar Thayer, APR**

703-255-6330 | Office

571-263-4035 | Cell

**Adam Kincaid**

703-255-6361 | Office

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## Town Wildlife Affected by Mysterious Illness

Wildlife managers throughout the region are hard at work trying to determine the source of a mysterious illness that is killing wild birds, including some in Vienna. Symptoms of the avian illness include eye swelling and crusty discharge as well as neurological signs.

“We’ve seen an uptick in reports of sick and dying birds in Vienna since the end of May,” said Animal Control Officer John Barker. “Until wildlife biologists can determine what is causing the birds to get sick, we’re appealing to the public to take action to help reduce the risk to wildlife in the region.”

Birds congregating at bird feeders and bird baths can transmit diseases to one another. Therefore, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources recommends the following standard precautions:

- Stop feeding birds until this wildlife morbidity/mortality event subsides;
- Clean feeders and bird baths with a 10% bleach solution (one part bleach mixed with nine parts water), rinse with water and allow to air dry;
- While no human health issues have been reported, you should avoid handling birds unless necessary. If you do handle them, wear disposable gloves. If picking up a dead bird, place an inverted plastic bag over your hand to avoid direct contact with the bird, seal the bag and dispose of it in household trash;
- Keep pets (including pet birds) away from sick or dead wild birds as a standard precaution; and
- If at any time you find multiple dead birds in your yard over a short period of time, regardless of whether or not there is an ongoing bird mortality event, it is prudent to clean feeders and bird baths with a 10% bleach solution.

If you encounter sick or dead birds, please report them to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources: [dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/bird-mortality-reporting-form](https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/bird-mortality-reporting-form).

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