



AVIAN BOTULISM

What is Avian Botulism?

Avian Botulism is an often-fatal disease of birds resulting from the ingestion of toxins produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. In the past, the Fredonia/Dunkirk area has experienced several incidences of sick and dead seagulls that were believed to have been infected with this disease. Other wild fowl may also be infected including ducks, geese, swans, and loons.

What are the symptoms of affected birds?

The symptoms of Birds with Avian Botulism are:

- Loss of ability to fly
- Loss of leg use
- Paralysis of voluntary muscles
- Inability to hold the head upright

What are the procedures if a bird is found?

If an employee should notice sea gulls or other birds on campus exhibiting any of the above symptoms:

1. Record the location, number of birds, and bird type
2. Call University Police (3333) immediately with the above information
3. University Police will contact Environmental Health & Safety (3796), the Chautauqua County Department of Health (366-8831), and the NYSDEC Falconer Office -665-1111 or Allegany office - 372-0645 - request to speak with the Wildlife unit.

If an employee notices a dead bird on campus the procedure is as follows:

1. Record the location, number of birds, and bird type
2. Call the Department of Health (716)-366-8831 for instructions on what to do with the bird. Please note: The Department of Health only collects fresh specimens.

If the Department of Health instructs for the carcass to be disposed of, the procedure is the same as the disposal of any dead animals on campus:

1. Record the location, number of birds, and bird type. Give this information to the EH&S office.
2. While wearing disposable gloves, place the carcass in a plastic bag, seal the bag, and deposit it in a dumpster.

Note: **Do not touch the birds with bare hands. If you do come into contact with a bird, wash contacted skin immediately with soap and hot water. Also, it is important to understand that wildlife infected with Avian Botulism is not considered a health threat to the human population.**