



Beach Discovery Raises Alarm as Catastrophe Approaches Australia

Description

A dog walker's visit to a serene Australian beach took a disturbing turn when he encountered a dark mass on the sand. David Parker initially thought it was "someone's old coat" being battered by the waves at Bathers Beach in Fremantle. However, as he approached, he realised it was the lifeless body of a pelican. Parker described the sight as "confronting," noting that he had never seen a dead one before.

This discovery comes against a backdrop of increasing concern, as H5 bird flu recently arrived in Australia, adding a grim context to this unfortunate find. While the virus had not yet been detected in pelicans in Australia, the federal government released a risk assessment indicating a "very high" threat to the species. Globally, the disease has been devastating for pelican populations, with approximately 40 percent mortality in Peru reported. Additionally, in Australia, the virus has led to significant die-offs of greater crested terns and has spread to seagulls.

The dead pelican has been reported to authorities for further examination via a 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline. The cause of death remains uncertain, but recent cases in the state indicate that botulism, a soil-borne illness exacerbated by recent heatwaves, has contributed to avian fatalities. Both bird flu and botulism can manifest similar neurological symptoms in birds, complicating diagnosis.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development stated that the pelican has been tested and removed from the beach. Officials emphasised that public reports are crucial in detecting the virus, urging anyone to provide specific details about any observed cases. These reports are assessed based on the risk of H5 bird flu and prioritised for further investigation or testing.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What did David Parker initially think the dark mass on the sand was?

- Option: An old coat
- Option: A piece of wood
- Option: A dead fish
- Option: A rock

2. Where did the dog walker find the dead pelican?

- Option: Bathers Beach



- Option: Cottesloe Beach
- Option: Scarborough Beach
- Option: Fremantle Markets

3. What virus recently arrived in Australia that raises concerns for pelicans?

- Option: H5N1
- Option: H7N9
- Option: H5 bird flu
- Option: H3N2

4. What percentage of pelican mortality has been reported in Peru due to the disease?

- Option: 20 percent
- Option: 30 percent
- Option: 40 percent
- Option: 50 percent

5. What soil-borne illness has contributed to avian fatalities in the area?

- Option: Salmonella
- Option: Botulism
- Option: Avian influenza
- Option: West Nile virus

6. Through what hotline can people report cases of dead birds?

- Option: 24-hour Emergency Bird Hotline
- Option: Wildlife Care Hotline
- Option: 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline
- Option: Animal Rescue Hotline

True-False

7. David Parker described the sight of the dead pelican as pleasant.

8. H5 bird flu has been detected in pelicans in Australia.

9. The cause of death for the pelican is confirmed to be bird flu.

10. Public reports are crucial for detecting the virus among birds.



11. Botulism can manifest similar neurological symptoms to those caused by bird flu.

12. The dead pelican was removed from the beach by local fishermen.

Gap-Fill

13. David Parker thought the dark mass was someone's old coat until he got closer and saw the lifeless body of a _____.

14. The discovery of the dead pelican comes amid increasing concern due to the arrival of _____ in Australia.

15. The federal government claimed a 'very high' threat to pelican species due to the _____ virus.

16. Approximately _____ percent mortality in pelican populations was reported in Peru.

17. The cause of death for the pelican remains _____ pending further examination.

18. Reports of dead birds are evaluated based on the risk of H5 bird flu and can lead to further _____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. An old coat 2. Bathers Beach 3. H5 bird flu 4. 40 percent 5. Botulism 6. 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline

True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. False 10. True 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. pelican 14. H5 bird flu 16. 40 17. uncertain 18. investigation

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1. Health - LEVEL6

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