



## Safety Alert - Avian Influenza

There has been an outbreak of Avian Influenza in the West Midlands. This is a highly infectious viral disease that may spread rapidly through the wild bird population. It is also a threat to birds on farms. The risk to human health is very low.

Government advice was issued on 7<sup>th</sup> November (2021) and is available [here](#), this may be updated in due course. This includes the following: -

*If you find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77 – please select option 7). Do not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. For further information see [advice to the public](#). There is advice here on what to do if you find a dead bird on domestic premises.*

You can help to reduce the spread of this disease by following good hygiene. The advice from the RSPCA to minimise the spread of the disease and to protect you own health is: -

- Don't go near any dead swans or birds or those seemingly in distress
- Thoroughly clean all equipment before and after going on the water
- Thoroughly wash hands regularly especially after being on the water
- Ideally have a separate pair of shoes (or boots) for use at the Club and/or clean your shoes thoroughly to avoid faecal contamination of other areas
- Those with long hair or ponytails should tie it up and stick in a bun and/or put it under a hat

The following information is available [here](#): -

*“Avian influenza is not an airborne virus; it spreads from bird to bird by direct contact or through contaminated body fluids and faeces. It can also be spread by contaminated feed and water or by dirty vehicles, clothing and footwear.*

*The avian influenza virus changes frequently, creating new strains, and there is a constant risk that one of the new strains may spread easily among people.*

*The Food Standards Agency has said that, on the basis of the current scientific evidence, avian influenza poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.”*

### Take care not to spread this disease through the bird population

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