



भारत सरकार
केंद्रीय चिड़ियाघर प्राधिकरण
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय



Government of India
CENTRAL ZOO AUTHORITY
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Date: as per e-sign

कंप्यूटर नंबर /Computer Number : 233429

CIRCULAR

Subject: Confirmation of Avian Influenza (H5N1) in Birds in the State of Sikkim – regarding.

Ref: (i) Letter no. WL-28/11/2023-WL (E- 229567), dated 12.01.2026 received from the Joint Director (WL), MoEF&CC (copy enclosed).

(ii) Letter no. K-12012/4/2026-AHC, dated 10.02.206 received from the Animal Husbandry Commissioner, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

Madam/ Sir,

With reference to the correspondence cited above, it is to inform that ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal, has confirmed a case of Avian Influenza (H5N1) in crows and owl which was tested positive in the district in and around Gangtok, Sikkim.

2. Avian influenza is a highly contagious viral disease affecting both domestic and wild birds, with zoonotic potential, and causes significant losses due to high mortality in birds. Although less frequently, avian influenza viruses have also been isolated from mammalian species, including humans. This complex disease is caused by viruses classified into multiple subtypes (e.g., H5N1, H5N3, H5N8, etc.), whose genetic characteristics evolve rapidly.

3. The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Government of India, has uploaded the 'Action Plan of Animal Husbandry for Preparedness, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza' on its official website. A copy of the same is enclosed herewith.

4. Further, the measures to be adopted have also been detailed in Letter No. K-12012/4/2026-AHC dated 10.02.2026 issued by the Animal Husbandry Commissioner, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (copy enclosed).

5. Accordingly, all concerned are advised to carefully review the above Action Plan and take necessary precautionary measures to safeguard birds in captivity, wild (free-living) migratory/resident birds within the zoo campus, and the keepers/personnel directly engaged in animal handling.

6. The zoo personnel involved in handling animals should take all necessary precautionary measures while performing their duties, including the use of appropriate safety gear such as protective clothing/aprons, gloves, face masks (preferably with filters), head covers, gum boots, etc. Sanitation, hygiene, and disinfection of personnel, bird enclosures, and the zoo campus should be maintained at the highest standards. All biosecurity and safety measures must be strictly adopted.

7. In case of any suspicion or detection of mortality among birds, samples should be immediately collected and sent for testing to the National Institute for High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), or any other designated diagnostic laboratory in the country, the list of which is provided in the Action Plan.

8. In the event of receipt of a positive report for Avian Influenza, the Joint Secretary (Livestock Health), Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, the Director, Animal Husbandry Department of the concerned State, and the local officers of the Animal Husbandry Department should be contacted immediately. A contingency plan should thereafter be prepared and implemented in accordance with the above-mentioned Action Plan.

9. A report in this regard may be furnished to this Authority for information and further necessary action.

Digitally signed by
V Clement Ben
Date: 17-02-2026
06:44:10

Yours sincerely

(**Dr. V. Clement Ben**/ डॉ. वी. क्लेमेंट बेन)
Member Secretary/ सदस्य सचिव

Distribution:

1. The Chief Wildlife Warden of all States / UT's.
2. Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary (Forests) of all States/ UTs
3. The Director/Officer-in-Charge/Curator, (All the recognized zoos of the country)

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