

Avian Botulism outbreak

Late afternoon on Sunday 22 April Town of Claremont (ToC) officers received a report from a member of the public regarding a small number of dead birds at the Lake. Jared (Supervisor Parks and Environment) attended and sighted a small number of dead birds and collected one sick bird. The bird was then taken to Murdoch University vet clinic for diagnosis and treatment.

By midday Monday we were told that Murdoch vets had reached a clinical diagnosis of Avian Botulism. This diagnosis will be confirmed by an autopsy.

Avian botulism occurs all over the world. This is a paralytic disease brought on by the Botulinum neurotoxin (BoNt). The degree of avian botulism outbreaks in populations is largely determined by how favourable conditions are for *C. botulinum*. (Wikipedia).

General consensus between ToC staff and vets is that this outbreak was likely brought about by a combination of environmental factors following the large rain events in Jan/Feb. High nutrient levels washed into the lake by these rains resulted in an algal bloom which, as it breaks down, contributed to low oxygen levels.

ToC staff will monitor the site daily to remove dead birds and rescue any sick birds. Members of the community can greatly assist this effort by reporting sick or dead birds to Town of Claremont on 9285 4300 or by email toc@claremont.wa.gov.au

Reporting sightings will help reduce the severity of this outbreak!

FOLC would like to thank the members of the public that made the initial reports and acknowledge the prompt and professional response mounted by ToC Parks and Environment staff.