



3930 West Land Park Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95822-1123  
saczoo.org

## NEWS RELEASE

Lesley Kirrene | Director of Institutional Advancement  
and Marketing  
Ph: 916-808-5150 | Cell: 916-545-0586

# Sac Zoo Protecting Birds from Avian Influenza

(Sacramento, CA - July 15, 2022) -- The Sacramento Zoo is committed to the health and safety of every animal in our care.

As a part of our ongoing efforts to keep our animals safe, we carefully monitor and track the occurrence of disease outbreaks, like avian influenza (or the "bird flu"), that may be a safety concern for the zoo's animals. Avian influenza is a viral infection that occurs naturally in wild birds. Some species of birds can carry and spread the disease without becoming ill while others can develop severe illness or even die when infected by certain strains of the virus. Avian influenza is not considered a significant public health threat to people, although individuals that work closely with sick birds can sometimes become infected.

Avian influenza outbreaks began to occur on the east coast of the United States earlier this year and the disease has continued to spread west. On July 13th, the USDA confirmed the first cases of a highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza from wild birds in several Northern California counties.

The zoo's veterinary medicine program is directed by the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and we are working with our veterinary partners to implement safety protocols for the birds under our care. Due to the potential risk to birds at the zoo, we are taking a variety of precautionary measures and have activated a comprehensive disease prevention plan. The zoo has already implemented many prevention measures including strict biosecurity procedures, increased monitoring of flock health, and staff training related to avian influenza response. As risk for an outbreak in our area increases, the zoo will implement additional measures as needed to help keep its animals safe. Future steps include use of enhanced biosecurity protocols, placement of tarp covers or netting over some aviaries, and movement of some birds to more protected areas of the zoo.

In some cases, birds – like the flamingos and others who live on the zoo's open-air lake habitat – will be temporarily relocated to safer housing off exhibit. Some of the larger birds – ostrich and emu – are currently remaining in their habitats under the watch of the animal care and veterinary teams but may be moved into shelters.

We will continue to closely monitor this situation and adjust our operations as necessary to maintain the health and safety of our animals until the risk subsides. We understand that the birds at the Sacramento Zoo are favorites for many of our guests, but we thank you for your patience and understanding as we keep them safe.

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**About the Sacramento Zoo**

The Sacramento Zoo is home to more than 400 native, rare and endangered animals and is one of more than 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Zoo inspires conservation awareness and action through exceptional animal care, education and recreation, and it welcomes an average of 500,000 visitors a year. The Sacramento Zoological Society formed in 1958 to support and raise funds for the zoo that was created in 1927 in William Land Park. In 1970, the Sacramento City Council adopted the name "Sacramento Zoo." And in 1997, as city funding continued to decrease, the Sacramento Zoological Society assumed responsibility for the Zoo's management and the majority of its financial support. For additional information visit [saczoo.org](http://saczoo.org).

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**Media contact: Lesley Kirrene // Cell: 916-545-0586**

