



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Confirmed case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza at Foothills Animal Shelter

All bird intakes suspended for a minimum of 14 days

(GOLDEN, CO – May 20, 2022) – Foothills Animal Shelter received a positive test result for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory on May 20, 2022.

The confirmed positive was discovered after the sudden death of two stray ducklings at the Shelter, with one testing positive for the H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus. The Shelter is working with the Colorado State Veterinarian and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is following all requirements from these agencies surrounding the outcome of this test.

The safety of our staff, volunteers, pets, and the community are the top priority of Foothills Animal Shelter. Following the guidance of the State Veterinarian, Foothills will not accept any birds, including chickens, ducks, geese, or exotic birds, into our care for at least 14 days.

"As a Socially Conscious Shelter, Foothills is committed to protecting the people and animals in our community and will continue to follow the guidance of the Colorado State Veterinarian and the Colorado Department of Agriculture following this positive test result," said Foothills Animal Shelter Lead Veterinarian Dr. Claire Vaiden. "We are saddened by the outcome of this test and appreciate the support of our community during this challenging time."

According to the [Colorado Department of Agriculture](#), HPAI has a mortality rate of 90%-100% within just a few days, so flock surveillance and disease reporting are critical to containing the spread of the virus.

"Avian influenza has a high mortality rate and flock owners should actively monitor their birds for clinical signs of HPAI, such as ruffled feathers or swelling and purple discoloration of the comb, wattles, eyelids and legs," said Colorado State Veterinarian Dr. Maggie Baldwin. "Anyone who notices any signs of illness or disease in their flocks should immediately notify the State Veterinarian's office at 303.869.9130."

As required by the State Veterinarian and the USDA, Foothills Animal Shelter performed humane euthanasia on the remaining birds in our care that were exposed to this highly contagious and fatal virus. This included three ducks, a chicken, and one pigeon. Additionally, three goslings were exposed to the virus and were later euthanized by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. All bird intakes are currently suspended at the Shelter for a minimum of 14 days.

More information regarding HPAI is available on the Colorado Department of Agriculture's [website](#).

Additional questions or interview requests can be directed to Joan Thielen, Marketing and Community Engagement Manager at Foothills Animal Shelter – jthielen@fas4pets.org or 720.352.8075.

Questions for the State Veterinary office can be directed to Olga Robak, Director of Communications and Public Awareness, at olga.robak@state.co.us or 720.428.0441.

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About Foothills Animal Shelter

Foothills Animal Shelter helps make lives better for people and pets in our community. As a Socially Conscious Shelter, we believe in creating the best outcomes for all animals that enter our care. We are a true resource for the pets and people we serve providing pet adoptions, pet licensing, lost and found, low-cost vaccinations and microchipping. Our Better Together Programs work to keep pets with their families by providing resources to pet owners in their time of need. Visit FoothillsAnimalShelter.org to learn more.