



NEWS RELEASE

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AVIAN FLU (BIRD FLU) RULED OUT, BUT DUCK DEATHS STILL A MYSTERY Metro Wastewater Reclamation District Continues to Work with Colorado Division of Wildlife and US Fish and Wildlife Service to Find Cause

DENVER, Feb. 5 — The Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) has told the Metro Wastewater Reclamation District that avian flu (bird flu) has been **ruled out** as the cause of death of about 375 ducks at Metro's treatment plant since early January.

"The deaths of these ducks continue to puzzle us all," said Steve Rogowski, director of operations and maintenance. "We are working with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to try to find the cause."

"Initially, we found ducks in the chlorine contact basin. However, our ongoing investigation has shown that ducks are dying in locations other than the chlorine basin, as well as on the South Platte River next to our site," said Rogowski.

"We've placed an emphasis on recovery of any sick ducks that we find," Rogowski said. As of today, Metro employees have turned 84 sick or injured ducks over to two DOW-approved rehabilitation centers.

Metro has also given DOW officers a number of specimens of dead ducks, which they have taken to the state's veterinary lab in Fort Collins where tests are still being run.

Metro water quality scientists walked the South Platte River last Thursday from upstream of Metro's plant at 64th and York to the point where Clear Creek joins the South Platte. They recovered a number of dead ducks, which were turned over to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and DOW.

The testing includes screening for a variety of diseases and toxicity-related issues.

"We hope we can get this problem resolved soon. Protecting the environment, including wildlife, is among our top priorities," added Rogowski.

The Metro Wastewater Reclamation District is the largest wastewater treatment agency in the Rocky Mountain West. It treats about 130 million gallons of wastewater a day and serves 1.5 million people in a 380-square mile service area that includes Denver, Arvada, Aurora, Lakewood, part of Westminster, Wheat Ridge, and Thornton, together with about 40 sanitation and water and sanitation districts in the metropolitan Denver area.

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