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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
5062	12.12.2018	13.12.2018	Kendrapara Odisha	www.newindianexpress.com/English http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2018/dec/12/bird-flu-alert-in-bhitarkanika-1910446.html
Title:	Bird flu alert in Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Kendrapara, SSU-Odisha			

Even as hundreds of migratory birds have arrived in the water bodies and trees of Bhitarkanika National Park, a flu alert has been sounded by forest and veterinary officials. Chief District Veterinary Officer of Kendrapara Dr Santanu Kumar Takairi said precautionary measures have been taken to detect sick birds in the park and its nearby areas. He said around 20,000 poultry birds have already been vaccinated to protect them from Ranikhet disease and flu. Poultry farmers have been urged to approach the nearest veterinary dispensary to get their birds vaccinated, he added.

Dr Takairi said bird flu alert has also been sounded in Baga Gahana, the heronry of the park where a large number of migratory species have already arrived. The forest and veterinary officials distributed leaflets and booklets among the villagers near the park to create awareness on bird flu, said the CDVO.

He said the Rapid Response Team (RRT) have been formed in all nine blocks of the district. Each RRT comprises 16 Veterinary Assistant Surgeons (VAS), 50 livestock inspectors, one Gomitra, Zilla Parishad members and social workers.

Dr Takairi said forest and veterinary officials are keeping a watchful eye on the migratory birds as they are prone to carry H5N1 strain of avian influenza. "We have

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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already started examining some avian species in Bhitarkanika but could not find any sick birds," he said, adding blood and stool samples of avian species, hens and poultries in all the nine blocks of the district will be collected soon and the samples sent for testing to Animal Disease Research Institute (ADRI), Cuttack .

Later, the officials of ADRI will send the samples to High-Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL) in Bhopal. "We have also trained around 40 poultry farm owners to detect any sick hens," said the CDVO.

Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) had identified 173 places across the country, including Chilika lake and Bhitarkanika National Park, as important sites for the congregation of avian species nine years back. If the avian influenza strain (H5N1) mixes with a human influenza strain thereby producing a new strain, it could spark a human influenza pandemic. Pandemics typically cause a great number of deaths and are also usually accompanied by significant social and economic disruption. The WHO has advised all member States, including India, to monitor their animal population in case the H5N1 strain of avian influenza is detected, said Dr Takairi.

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