

From: [Wilson, Courtney](#)
To: [Wood, Darleen](#); [Patterson, Melinda](#); [Flynn, Brendan](#); [Alexander, Kerry](#)
Cc: [Frechette, David](#)
Subject: Re: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River
Date: Wednesday, July 28, 2021 3:15:04 PM

Hello,

I spoke with Massachusetts's Wildlife Biologist today as well as Massachusetts's head of waterfowl regarding the ducks. They stated it sounds like avian botulism again and no testing of the ducks is needed. The best thing to do is to pick up the deceased ducks to prevent other ducks from getting it. They also recommended the city place signs in the area stating not to feed the ducks.

I went to the Riverwalk today and it appears the water level is down again and the ducks are accessible. Melinda and I will begin collecting the bodies in hopes to stop the spread.

Best,
Courtney Wilson
Animal Control Officer
Lowell Police Department
978-674-4277

From: Wood, Darleen
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 7:43 PM
To: Patterson, Melinda; Flynn, Brendan; Alexander, Kerry
Cc: Frechette, David; Wilson, Courtney
Subject: RE: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

Thank you

Once the State Biologist returns my call, I will advise further.

Best,
Darleen

From: Patterson, Melinda
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 7:21 PM
To: Flynn, Brendan <BFlynn@lowellma.gov>; Wood, Darleen <DWood@lowellma.gov>; Alexander, Kerry <KAlexander@lowellma.gov>
Cc: Frechette, David <DFrechette@lowellma.gov>; Wilson, Courtney <CWilson@lowellma.gov>
Subject: Re: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

Good Evening,

We were able to capture one duck that was still alive on the sand/ beach area of the Merrimack behind the Baseball park and sent it to Tufts in Grafton to be looked at on Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

We also forwarded multiple pictures of the deceased ducks and a video of the live duck to Colleen Hubbard with Mass Wildlife last Wednesday. Miss Hubbard stated she would forward the information to a biologist in addition to the information and/or places where the ducks are predominantly being seen deceased in. We have not yet heard back.

There is also minimal if any land to access the deceased ducks due to the high water currently in the Merrimack closer to behind Riverwalk Place/Way. That's where we did see the majority of them.

Please let us know what you need us to do.

Sincerely,

Melinda Patterson | Animal Control Officer Assistant
The City of Lowell
50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852
t: 978.674.4277 | f: 978.970.4162 |
<https://lowellma.gov/299/Animal-Control>

From: Flynn, Brendan
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 4:34 PM
To: Wood, Darleen; Alexander, Kerry
Cc: Frechette, David; Wilson, Courtney; Patterson, Melinda
Subject: RE: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

Thank you Darlene.

From: Wood, Darleen <DWood@lowellma.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 4:07 PM
To: Flynn, Brendan <BFlynn@lowellma.gov>; Alexander, Kerry <KAlexander@lowellma.gov>
Cc: Frechette, David <DFrechette@lowellma.gov>; Wilson, Courtney <CWilson@lowellma.gov>;
Patterson, Melinda <MPatterson@lowellma.gov>
Subject: RE: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

Hi Brendan

We did have an incident similar to this.

We were advised to remove any bird bodies that we could and possibly have some testing done at the State, however they did not test due to other circumstances around that incident.

I have contacted the State and advise them of this concern.

Once I hear from them and discuss the situation, I will circle back to everyone with our course of action.

Thank you

Best,
Darleen

From: Flynn, Brendan
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 1:24 PM
To: Wood, Darleen <DWood@lowellma.gov>; Alexander, Kerry <KAlexander@lowellma.gov>
Subject: FW: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

Hello Darlene.

Kerry mentioned that you have advised us about a similar issue with the duck population from 2019.

Is there anyone at the State that we should inform about this?

Thanks,
Brendan

Brendan Flynn | *Deputy Director - Finance Health & Human Services*
The City of Lowell Health Department
107 Merrimack Street, 4th Floor | Lowell, MA 01852
t: 978-674-1051
c: 978-624-0187
<http://www.lowellma.gov>

Subject: FW: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

From: Philip Schreffler
Sent: Sunday, July 25, 2021 5:13:34 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Cigliano, Francesca; info@lowellhumanesociety.org; Donoghue, Eileen; Belanger, Joanne
Subject: Reporting Potential Botulism Issue in the Merrimack River

All,

I apologize if I have reached out to the wrong individuals, but I would like to report something very alarming I saw while walking alongside the river behind the Boott Mills.

While walking, I saw one duck dying, and another severely weakened. Both showed the telltale signs of botulism in birds, which is a weak and floppy neck, also known as limberneck, of which four varieties can easily spread to humans.

There were also a handful of other bodies of ducks neck to the river, either having died there, or washed up there. I am concerned that this is an early warning of a water problem.

If these animals are catching botulism from contaminated mud or river water, and that this

might make a jump to humans or other animals in Lowell if it is already spreading in the duck population.

With any luck I am entirely wrong, but I would like to report this potential problem to those with the resources to act on it.

Thank you, and let me know if I can help in any way.

-Philip Schreffler