



### Top Stories

#### Swan found dead in Fife, Scotland confirmed to be H5, Avian Flu

Initial tests done on a dead swan found in Fife, Scotland have come back positive for H5, Avian Flu. However; this case has not yet been identified as the deadly H5N1 strain and officials say that there is no need to be concerned.

#### Thaksin departure doesn't signal end to Thai political crisis

Despite promising to step down before the new parliament convenes, caretaker Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is still embroiled in controversy. Opposition parties have stated they will not run in the by-elections on April 23.

### Featured story

#### Photo Essay: Cherry Blossoms Bloom in DC



The Japanese Cherry Blossoms have again bloomed around the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., marking the beginning of spring for city residents and thousands of visitors. The accompanying annual National Cherry Blossom Festival commemorates the March 27, 1912 gift of 3,000 Japanese cherry trees to the city from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- National Geographic Society unveils the restored Gospel of Judas in Washington D.C. Written in Coptic, the document is thought to have come from the 2nd Century. It has been deteriorating rapidly when found.
- A 1,500 year old pyramid called the Hill of the Star has been found in Mexico.
- Orthodox Jews in Boro Park in New York City continue to protest after a 75-year-old man was beaten and arrested by police for talking on a cell phone. NYPD Chief Joseph Esposito allegedly cursed out the protestors in anti-Semitic terms, resulting in condemnations and calls for him to step down.
- Palaeontologists announce the discovery of the Tiktaalik genus, an important fossil link between fish and land animals.
- Israeli police arrest and release Khaled Abu Arafa, minister of Jerusalem affairs in the new Hamas-led government of the Palestinian Authority.
- The New Zealand Parliament passes an act making New Zealand Sign Language the third official language of New Zealand, alongside English and Māori.
- Health experts announce that a dead swan found in Scotland has tested positive for bird flu. It has been further confirmed that the bird had the deadly H5N1 strain of the virus. Scotland and the UK confirm H5N1 virus, but say a GB-wide poultry housing requirement would be "disproportionate."

#### Dead swan found in Fife, Scotland confirmed to have been infected with H5N1 Bird Flu virus

REUTERS is reporting that tests done on a dead Mute Swan found in the village of Cellardyke in Fife, Scotland has tested positive for the deadly strain of H5N1 Bird Flu virus.

Sky News is now reporting that two other swans found in Richmond Park in Glasgow are being tested for the H5N1 virus. They are among at least 14 other dead swans found in Glasgow being tested for the H5N1 virus.

This is the United Kingdom's first confirmed case of the H5N1 virus and would make the U.K. the 14th country to report the virus.

"The risk to humans has not changed by the fact that we have found the virus in the U.K.. There is a better chance of a person winning the national lottery than catching bird flu in the U.K. today," said Doctor Jim Robertson from the National Institutes for Biological Standards and Control in a press conference.

"We also have to work on the assumption that there is some spread among wild birds. "There is no doubt we are getting closer to the day when moving birds indoors will be necessary," said former President of the British Veterinary Association, Bob McCracken. "The situation is that the virus is there, and it will probably continue to

circulate among the birds. It will spread through close contact, irrespective of species. There is one big question mark: Will the virus disappear from wild birds after a period of six months, or will it still be present after a period of six years?" hadded McCracken.

In a statement by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, released yesterday, the Scottish Executive confirmed that a "highly pathogenic H5 avian flu" virus was found in a sample taken from the dead swan.

The swan was discovered March 29, 2006 and has been confirmed as a domestic species and officials say that it may have caught the virus from another infected bird. Officials also report that the area where the swan has been found is being sealed off.

"In accordance with a recent EU decision the Scottish Executive is putting in place a protection zone of a minimum of three kilometres radius and a surveillance zone of 10 kilometers. Keepers of birds in the protection zone are being instructed to isolate their birds from wild birds, by taking them indoors where ever possible," said the Scottish Executive in a statement.

Samples from the swan were sent to the European Union Bird Flu Laboratory at Weybridge.

"Bird keepers outside the protection zone should redouble their efforts to prepare for bringing their birds indoors if that becomes necessary. They must also review their biosecurity measures to ensure that all possible precautions have been taken," said Charles Milne, Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland yesterday in the statement.

An exercise named 'Exercise Hawthorn' was to prepare people for a possible pandemic was taking place yesterday and was halted just after the discovery of the dead swan. Officials were in the second phase of the exercise.

Taking part in the exercises were the Ministry of Defence, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Environment Agency and several other areas of the British government.

"I brought to an end the national avian influenza exercise to ensure that we can bring all our resources to bear on this situation. We are already in a high state of readiness and I have every confidence that officials north and south of the border will work together to manage this incident successfully," said the United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer, Debby Reynolds.

However; today Reynolds stated "there is no reason for public health concern" and also stated that in order for Bird Flu to infect humans, it would require "extremely close contact with infected birds, particularly feces."

According to the World Health Organization H5N1 has killed 109 people worldwide since 2003.

## Today in History

**529:** Byzantine Emperor Justinian I issued the first draft of the Corpus Juris Civilis, a first attempt to codify Roman law.

**1348:** King Karel I of Bohemia issued a Golden Bull to establish the Charles University, the first university in Central Europe.

**1795:** The metre was adopted as the unit of length in France.

**1945:** World War II: The Yamato of the Imperial Japanese Navy was sunk 200 miles north of Okinawa during Operation Ten-Go.

**1947:** The Arab Ba'th Party was founded in Damascus.

April 7 is World Health Day

## Quote of the Day

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

~ William Wordsworth ~

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