

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 22, 2025

To: All Dinosaur National Monument Staff

From: DINO Natural Resource Staff

Re: Procedures for handling dead animals in developed areas and reporting injured/sick wildlife

****PLEASE SHARE WITH STAFF MEMBERS WHO DO NOT REGULARLY RECEIVE EMAIL****

Procedures for reporting, handling, and disposal of dead animals and reporting sick/injured wildlife that are discovered OUTDOORS within developed areas of the Monument are described here. Developed areas include campgrounds, visitor centers, housing areas, maintenance yards, front-country trails, and areas/attractions the public can access with vehicles, such as Josie Morris Cabin and Harpers Corner Road.

The purpose of this memo is to clarify when employees *should* and *should not* report dead and sick animal sightings to Resource Management, Facilities Management, and Law Enforcement personnel.

PLEASE DO REPORT: Groupings of dead animals of the same species. This is the first indication that there may be a wildlife disease outbreak, such as tularemia, rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHDV2), H5N1, or plague. *Example: You wake up one morning and the usually bustling prairie dog town in your side yard is strangely quiet or you walk/drive down the road and over the course of a couple of miles see numerous dead animals of the same species. Also please report if you see a number of dead individual birds over the course of a few days; especially if they are waterfowl, hawks, owls, pinyon jays, crows or ravens.*

WHAT TO DO: If you observe such a die-off, do not handle dead or sick animals and keep pets away. If the dead animals are rabbits, RHDV2 or tularemia is probable. Please refer to guidance available from your supervisor on the safe collection and disposal of all dead rabbits. For all other species call, text, or email natural resource management staff with the location and nature of the issue. Do not move the animals. Resource Management staff will determine if the animals need to be tested for disease, coordinate the safe handling and disposal of affected animals, and work with the Interpretation division to issue Monument-wide communication to employees and visitors on how to reduce risk of exposure if necessary.

PLEASE DO NOT REPORT: Dead individual animals and roadkill. These are likely animals that happened to die in areas where people also occur. These individuals pose no elevated risk to human health or safety. *Example: A visitor reports a single dead bird in the Quarry Visitor Center parking lot.*

WHAT TO DO: Gently pick up the dead animal while wearing nitrile gloves using a shovel. Carry the animal beyond the edge of the developed area and place the animal into the bushes and grass where it can decompose naturally, or become a meal for scavengers, such as magpies. Never dump dead animals off the monument. It is also not necessary to bag them or place them in the trash or dumpster. Boxes of nitrile gloves and shovels are available from Facilities Management. If you are particularly squeamish about handling dead animals, please call Facilities Management, Visitor & Resource Protection, or Resource Management staff for assistance.

EXCEPTION 1: If you find single sick or dead raptor refer to H5N1 information and please DO report that to natural resource staff.

Exception 2: A new disease of wild and domestic rabbits showed up in Dinosaur NM in 2022 called rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHDV2). Dead rabbits should be removed and NOT buried. Please follow guidance available from your supervisor for proper handling and disposal of all dead rabbits found in FRONT COUNTRY environments.

PLEASE DO REPORT: Sick or injured wildlife, especially bats and eagles, in developed areas and areas of high visitation. *Examples: A visitor reports a mule deer tangled in the fence along Harpers Corner Road. You observe a bighorn sheep with a heaving cough in Jones Hole.*

WHAT TO DO: If you observe a sick or injured animal, do not approach it and keep pets and visitors away. Call or email natural resource staff and/or a lead ranger with the location and nature of the issue. Resource Management will coordinate a response. Do NOT call the state wildlife agency directly. Dinosaur NM staff will contact other authorities if needed.

These revised procedures DO NOT REPLACE or SUPERCEDE procedures for disposing of mice captured in traps INSIDE OF BUILDINGS. If you need information on those procedures, please contact Nathan Charlton

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