

## **National Government Implements Measures in Response to the Presence of Dead Birds in Galapagos Islands**

In response to the presence of dead birds on several islands in the Galapagos archipelago, the technical team from the Galapagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) and the Agency for the Control and Regulation of Biosafety and Quarantine for Galapagos (ABG) are working on collecting samples and conducting laboratory analyses to determine the cause of death of the animals. Preliminarily, out of the five specimens examined, three have tested positive for avian influenza H5N1; however, the collected material will be sent to the National Institute of Public Health Research (INSPI) in Guayaquil for confirmation.

In this context, the Galapagos National Park has activated biosafety protocols to reduce the risk of virus transmission. Among the initial measures taken is the closure of visitor sites where affected birds have been detected, including Genovesa and Punta Pitt (San Cristóbal), and as a preventive measure, Punta Suarez and Punta Cevallos (Española). Furthermore, communication has been sent to tour operators to strengthen the process of disinfecting footwear and clothing when embarking and disembarking at other terrestrial visitor sites, as well as continuous disinfection of outdoor common areas and auxiliary boats used for passenger landings.

The GNPD and the ABG continue to monitor the habitat and nesting areas of endemic bird populations such as Galapagos penguins and cormorants and are dispatching multiple teams to other parts of the archipelago to assess the situation. Naturalist guides and tour operators have been requested to collaborate with wildlife observation and surveillance, and to immediately report any observations to the established emergency hotline.

"This ministry deeply regrets the arrival of this virus in Galapagos. We have mobilized all our resources and experts to implement measures that will reduce its impact on this unique ecosystem. However, we urgently appeal to the public: if you encounter sick or dead birds, please do not touch or collect them," stated the Minister of Environment, Water, and Ecological Transition, José Antonio Dávalos.

Finally, a specialized team has been tasked with collecting the dead birds and proceeding with the appropriate disposal to prevent the spread of the virus, in accordance with established protocols.