

ANTHRAX OUTBREAK IN LAKE NAKURU NATIONAL PARK

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) wishes to notify the public of an outbreak of anthrax in Lake Nakuru National Park. The first confirmed case affecting a buffalo was detected on 29th March 2019 and by 3rd April 2019; eight buffaloes had died of the disease. On 4th April 2019 three more buffalo carcasses and one waterbuck carcass were sighted. All carcasses were appropriately disposed and the areas disinfected by a team of KWS veterinarians to control spread of the disease.

Samples were collected from the carcasses and are being analyzed at the Regional Veterinary Investigation Laboratory in Nakuru.

Appropriate equipment for disposal of the carcasses were obtained and disposal commenced following recommendations for control of anthrax.

Given the virulence nature of *Bacillus anthracis*, the causative agent of anthrax, urgent measures have been taken to prevent spread of the disease to other animals in the park, especially endangered species. These measures include: Sampling all carcasses for laboratory confirmation, immediate and appropriate disposal of suspected anthrax cases to prevent environmental contamination and cut off any potential sources of infection to animals, disinfection of suspected anthrax carcasses' sites, enhanced monitoring to facilitate early detection of carcasses before they are dismembered by scavengers thus causing environmental contamination

Anthrax is a zoonotic disease that is a threat to humans, and therefore adequate measures need to be taken to prevent any spread to first-line personnel involved in the handling of suspected carcasses. Already, prophylactic treatment to all the personnel involved has been done, while Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have been provided. There is low risk of infection to people who do not come into direct contact with the carcasses.

KWS has embarked on vaccination of endangered species, particularly the white rhino which interacts more with buffaloes. This may be extended to other endangered species namely the Rothschild giraffe and black rhino depending on how the situation progresses.

Meanwhile State Department of Wildlife Principal Secretary, Dr. Susan Koech April 8, 2019 headed to Lake Nakuru National Park to apprise herself with the anthrax situation. She will address journalists after a brief by the park management.