

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Fish and Wildlife

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Avian Influenza 2022 Information and Biosecurity Guidelines

Since late November 2021 there have been a number of cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) detected in the Eastern and Midwestern United States and Canada, in both wild birds and poultry facilities. On February 19, 2022, the first case was confirmed in Suffolk County, NY in a backyard flock. It is likely that there are infected wild birds in New York that have not yet been detected. The USDA and NY Department of Agriculture and Markets will be leading the disease response, which will include testing, quarantine, and possible depopulation of infected domestic birds. There is no way to contain the infection in wild birds. Poultry and gamebird facilities, falconers and backyard flock owners should be extremely cautious in their biosecurity measures to prevent transmission. Falconers should avoid having their birds consume any at risk species including waterfowl and shore birds.

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus which is carried by free flying wild birds such as ducks and geese, gulls and shore birds. It is periodically transmitted to domestic poultry (chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) where it can spread between facilities via human and vehicle traffic. Strains that can cause high mortality in both wild birds and domestic poultry are designated as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Typical symptoms could include diarrhea, discharge from the nose, coughing and sneezing, and incoordination. Fewer than 20% of wild birds will show any symptoms of illness when infected with avian influenza, and many die with no warning. Report any unusual illness or deaths of birds to the Wildlife Health Program or DEC Regional Office (see links below).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that the recent HPAI detections in birds [do not present an immediate public health concern](#). No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States. However, although the risk of human cases in the US appears to be low at this time, you should follow precautions when handling wild birds, particularly water birds and raptors. Monitor your health for any signs of flu-like symptoms within a week of handling wild birds suspected or confirmed infected with HPAI and consult your health care provider if you have any questions.

The CDC recommends poultry workers utilize the following precautions:

1. Anyone handling wild water birds, shorebirds or raptors wear nitrile or latex gloves, masks recommended (N95 or KN95) and eye protection (goggles, safety glasses or face shield). Change masks and gloves frequently and always between groups of birds or locations.

2. Don't drink, eat, or smoke when handling birds. Be mindful of handling other objects or touching your face (pens, cell phones) while wearing contaminated gloves.
3. After removing your gloves, wash your hands thoroughly for at least 30 seconds (using soap/water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before eating, smoking, using a cell phone, and touching your face, hair, or exposed skin.
4. When working outdoors, work upwind of birds to decrease the risk of inhaling airborne particulate, such as dust, feathers, or dander.
5. Avoid handling wildlife and interacting with backyard poultry, poultry fair exhibits or commercial poultry sites to avoid the potential of transferring HPAI virus in either direction. Anyone working with wildlife or poultry should wash clothes and disinfect shoes between sites or wear dedicated clothes and footwear for each location.

Links:

Contact information to report suspect birds in New York:

<https://cwhl.vet.cornell.edu/contact-us>

Kevin.hynes@dec.ny.gov 518-478-3034 or 518-478-2203

Or contact a regional DEC Wildlife Office

[Map of all DEC Offices - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation](#)

For personnel in contact with wild birds or poultry:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/groups.htm>

Biosecurity for facilities:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-biosecurity/bird-biosecurity>

More about Avian Influenza:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-biosecurity/bird-biosecurity>

Current Outbreak Updates:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai>