

Biosecurity Alert for Virginia Poultry Owners and Waterfowl Hunters

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) was recently detected in wild waterfowl in Virginia. The confirmations consisted of two hunter harvested wild migratory waterfowl in Henrico County. Given the recent detection of HPAI in wild waterfowl in North Carolina and South Carolina, in the same migratory path of wild waterfowl known as the Atlantic Flyway, these detections were not unexpected.

Anyone involved with poultry production in Virginia, from small backyard flocks to large commercial production, should review their biosecurity activities to help ensure the health of their birds and prevent contact between their birds and wild birds. Biosecurity information is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-resources/df-resources. Additional biosecurity information on backyard flocks can be found at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.

Wild birds can be infected with HPAI without appearing sick. Waterfowl hunters can reduce the risk of exposing poultry or pet birds to HPAI by following guidance provided by the USDA at www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2015/fsc_hpai_hunters.pdf.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to the general public from HPAI infections to be low. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of poultry, wild game birds, and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F kills bacteria and viruses, including HPAI.

For more information on the first H5 HPAI detection in the United States since 2016, please refer to the USDA press release issued on January 21, 2022 at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2022/hpai-sc.

Virginia poultry owners should report unusual poultry illnesses or deaths to the State Veterinarian's Office at (804) 692-0601 or at vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov or through the USDA's toll-free number, (866) 536-7593.

Reports of multiple (at least five) dead, wild, free-ranging waterfowl (ducks, geese, or swans.), seabirds (terns, gulls, cormorants, etc.), shorebirds (dunlin, black-bellied plovers, sanderlings, ruddy turnstones, etc.), upland game birds (turkeys, grouse, or quail), or avian scavengers (crows, raptors, owls, etc.) should be submitted to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/bird-mortality-reporting-form/>.