

HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA

INFORMATION FOR HUNTERS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern. HPAI cases in humans are rare, and symptoms are typically mild. While the risk of a person becoming infected is low, hunters may be at higher risk from handling waterfowl.

To minimize your risk, follow these precautions from the USDA-APHIS:

- Harvest only game that appears to be healthy.
- Do not handle sick game – report to your state wildlife agency.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks, gloves, and eye protection when handling and cleaning game.
- Field dress game outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.
- Do not feed carcass parts to pets or leave behind for other wild animals to scavenge. Double bag carcass and unwanted organs in plastic bags for disposal in trash.
- After handling game, wash your hands thoroughly, and clean and disinfect all equipment and surfaces that came into contact with game.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke when handling game.
- Properly cook any game meat you eat to an internal temperature of 165° F to kill the virus.

Monitor your health for any signs of flu-like symptoms within a week of handling wild birds and consult your health care provider if you have any questions. Consider receiving seasonal influenza vaccines.

If you keep backyard poultry, be aware that the virus can be transported on hunting equipment, gear, and boots/footwear. Designated clothing used only for hunting that can be washed in hot water can help keep your flock healthy.

Report suspected HPAI mortalities and sick birds to your local WGFD biologist-warden-office or the WGFD-Wildlife Health Laboratory

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wildlife Health Laboratory

1-307-745-5865
wgf-lab-notifications@wyo.gov



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Avian influenza is a viral infection of birds caused by a group of influenza viruses (type A influenzas). These viruses naturally circulate in wild birds and are maintained in populations largely through fecal-oral contact. Like all influenza viruses, avian influenza can change rapidly by mixing its genetic components to form different virus subtypes. Certain subtypes are associated with severe disease in domestic poultry (highly pathogenic -HPAI).

The virus is shed in saliva, mucus, and feces of infected birds and is transmitted to other birds and humans via ingestion or inhalation. Signs associated with the central nervous system may be more common in wild birds such as swimming in circles, head tilt and lack of coordination. Other signs could include edema or swelling of the head, respiratory signs, diarrhea or general depression and inappetance. Some affected wild birds are just found dead.

This current strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza was first detected in North America in December 2021 and first detected in Wyoming in March 2022.

For up-to-date info on HPAI from the WGFD as well as a map of current HPAI distribution in the state: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-Disease-Info>

Other resources for info on highly pathogenic avian influenza can be found at:

- USDA-APHIS:
<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza>
- Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-flu-summary.htm>
- For info about human health and HPAI please contact the Wyoming Department of Health: <https://health.wyo.gov/>

