



## **Frequently Asked Questions: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a disease caused by infection with a strain of influenza virus. There have been detections of HPAI in wild birds as well as domestic poultry in the United States in 2022. New Jersey had detections of HPAI in wild birds in February 2022 and had its first detection in a backyard domestic poultry flock in May 2022.

### **Can people be infected with HPAI?**

While HPAI is zoonotic, meaning that it can be spread from animals to humans, the risk to people from the current H5N1 HPAI is considered low. The situation is being monitored closely. There has only been one case of HPAI in the United States in 2022- this individual had contact with infected poultry, and experienced mild symptoms of fatigue that fully resolved.

### **How is HPAI transmitted?**

Birds that are infected with HPAI can shed the virus in their saliva, nasal secretion, and feces. Susceptible birds can become infected by direct contact with infected birds that are shedding the virus, or through contact with surfaces that are contaminated with virus from the infected birds.

The risk to people of this strain of HPAI is considered to be low. While rare, a person could become infected if they have contact with an infected bird or a contaminated environment and get the virus into their eyes, nose or mouth, or it is inhaled.

### **Can HPAI be spread through food products?**

Egg and poultry products are safe to eat when handled and cooked properly to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **What should I do if I have poultry?**

Information for poultry owners from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/>. Sick or dead poultry should be reported to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at **609-671-6400** or [state.veterinarian@ag.nj.gov](mailto:state.veterinarian@ag.nj.gov).

### **What should I do if I find a sick or dead wild bird?**

If you find a sick bird, contact either your local animal control or one of NJ's permitted wildlife rehabilitators. Do not attempt to care for these animals on your own.

You can find a list permitted wildlife rehabilitators by county [here](#).

For deceased birds, it is recommended that while wearing gloves and a mask (as this is a respiratory disease) you double bag the birds and dispose of them. NJ Fish and Wildlife is not currently testing birds for surveillance purposes as it has been established that wild birds are a natural reservoir of the virus (namely waterfowl), and it has already been identified in those populations in New Jersey.

For more information on detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild birds visit the [USDA APHIS website](#) for updates.



If multiple birds are found dead in a small area over a short period of time, please contact either 1-877-WARNDEP or Dr. Nicole Lewis ([nicole.lewis@dep.nj.gov](mailto:nicole.lewis@dep.nj.gov)) for assistance.

### **Resources**

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/novel\\_flu.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/novel_flu.shtml)

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/>

[https://www.nj.gov/dep/fqw/news/2022/04-19\\_avian\\_influenza.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/fqw/news/2022/04-19_avian_influenza.htm)

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-flu-summary.htm>

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