

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) Confirmed in California Backyard Flock

Sacramento, CA, August 11, 2022 – Following an investigation by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) has confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a backyard flock in Sacramento County. In addition to this confirmation, HPAI has also been detected in wild birds in the following twelve counties: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Mendocino, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, and Stanislaus. The viral spread is promoted by wild birds especially in wild waterfowl such as ducks and geese, but many other wild bird species can also be a source of spread. Poultry owners can protect their flocks by increasing their biosecurity practices.

To protect other flocks in California, the confirmed infected location is currently under quarantine, and the birds have been euthanized to prevent further disease spread.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the current detections of HPAI in birds does not present a public health concern and the public health risk remains low. While not recommended, if you handle sick or dead wild birds, use gloves (or a plastic bag turned inside out) to place the body in a garbage bag. Please contact your local public health department for further information on preventing avian influenza in people.

Avian influenza is a highly contagious and often fatal disease in birds. We are urging poultry owners to increase their biosecurity practices. Biosecurity is the measures taken to prevent disease from entering and/or leaving a premises or location. Although this outbreak of avian influenza is primarily being spread by wild birds, the virus can be further spread between domestic flocks through contact with infected poultry, from contaminated equipment, and even the shoes and clothing worn by poultry caretakers. Here are some biosecurity recommendations to help protect your flock:

- Wash your hands before and after handling your birds. This includes when moving from coop to coop.
- Prevent contact between domestic and wild birds by bringing your birds indoors or ensuring their outdoor area is fully enclosed and covered.
- If you have bodies of water on your property such as ponds or ditches, consider draining them to avoid attracting wild birds, and keep your domestic birds away from this potentially contaminated water.
- Use sanitized well or city water for your birds.
- Prevent rodents and predators from entering your coop.
- Keep feed covered and spills cleaned up to avoid attracting wild birds and rodents.
- Wash and disinfect boots and equipment when moving between coops.
- Do not share equipment or supplies with neighbors.
- Clean and disinfect equipment and other supplies between uses.
- Clean and disinfect your shoes and vehicle tires after visiting feedstores and other places frequented by other poultry owners or wild bird hunters.
- Avoid visiting places where wild birds congregate such as lakes and ponds.

Report any unusual or suspicious numbers of sick or dead domestic birds immediately to the CDFA Sick Bird Hotline at (866) 922-2473. Monitor your birds for the following symptoms:

- Trouble breathing
- Clear, runny discharge from nose, mouth, and eyes
- Lethargy or lack of energy
- Loss of appetite
- Drinking less
- Swollen eyes, head, wattles, or combs
- Discolored or bruised comb, wattles or legs
- Stumbling, falling or twisted neck
- Sudden death

Report any unusual or suspicious dead wild birds to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Monitoring/Mortality-Report. If you have questions about wildlife rehabilitation, please contact California Department of Fish and Wildlife directly. Contact information is available here: [Wildlife Health Lab - Avian Investigations \(ca.gov\)](http://Wildlife Health Lab - Avian Investigations (ca.gov))

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For more information and updates on wild bird detections in California, visit the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) website.

More information on [avian influenza](#) and how to [protect flocks through biosecurity measures](#) can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's website.