



PRESS RELEASE

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AVIAN INFLUENZA “BIRD FLU” DETECTED IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – There have been reports of isolated cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza, or more commonly known as “bird flu,” in wild birds in Santa Barbara County. As of today, there have not been any cases of bird flu amongst any of the poultry farms in Santa Barbara County.

Bird Flu is disease found in some populations of wild waterfowl that can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese and guinea fowl, as well as a wide variety of other domesticated and wild birds. The risk to the general public in Santa Barbara County is very low at this time, but residents are reminded to avoid direct contact with wild birds, particularly birds that appear ill or are dead.

Keepers of commercial and domestic flocks as well as owners of backyard poultry are advised to adhere to the following recommendations to help protect their flocks from HPAI:

- Prevent contact between domestic and wild birds by bringing your birds into an enclosure that is 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.
- Wash your hands before and after handling your birds, including when handling birds from coop to coop.
- Prevent rodents and predators from entering your coop.
- Prevent pets such as cats and dogs from eating dead wild birds.
- 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.

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HPAI, albeit rarely, can also infect humans. Symptoms of bird flu virus infections in humans have ranged from no symptoms or mild illness (such as eye redness or mild flu-like upper respiratory symptoms), to severe (such as pneumonia requiring hospitalization) and included fever (temperature of 100°F or greater) or feeling feverish, cough, sore throat, runny or stuff nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing click [here](#) for more information. If you experience any of these symptoms after coming in contact with a sick or dead bird consult your physician immediately. Bird flu virus infection is usually diagnosed by collecting a swab from the upper respiratory tract (nose or throat) of the sick person. Testing is more accurate when the swab is collected during the first few days of illness.

Please report any unusual or suspicious numbers of sick or dead *domestic* birds immediately to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Sick Bird Hotline at (866) 922-2473; 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.

- 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
- Decrease in egg production or misshapen eggs
- Diarrhea

If you have questions about wildlife rehabilitation, please contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife directly. Contact information is available here: [Wildlife Health Lab - Avian Investigations \(ca.gov\)](#). For general public inquiries regarding HPAI in California, please call 916-217-7517 or email cdfa.HPAInfo@cdfa.ca.gov. For media inquiries, please call 916-654-0462 or send an email to: OfficeOfPublicAffairs@cdfa.ca.gov.

Stay Informed

For the latest updates on California domestic poultry, follow on CDFA's Animal Health Branch on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#). For up to date HPAI alerts visit [CDFA - AHFSS - AHB - Avian Influenza \(ca.gov\)](#)

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.