

LAKE METROPARKS

Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center

Avian Influenza Information Sheet

What is Avian Influenza?

Avian Influenza (AI) is a virus commonly known as “bird flu.” It is an infectious disease found in birds. It is not found in humans. In December 2014, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI H5) in 20 states. Positive HPAI cases involved wild free-ranging birds (ducks, geese, gulls, swans), backyard flocks and commercial flocks (chicken, quail, turkey). Avian flu is contagious to other species of birds and is spread by infected migratory waterfowl. The virus can also be spread from infected flocks to farms via contaminated equipment, clothing, shoes, cages or vehicles.

Since 2014, more than 44 million birds have been affected in the United States. The most common type of HPAI currently circulating through the U.S., H5N2, is a reassembly of a Eurasian and North American virus.

To date, HPAI has not been detected in Ohio, however, it has been found in states that border Ohio.

What is Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza?

AI viruses are classified as either high or low pathogenicity. Pathogenicity is based on the ability of the virus to produce disease. High pathogenicity has the potential to be more contagious and spread rapidly.

How is HPAI spread?

The current HPAI H5 strains are carried asymptotically (showing no symptoms) in select species of migratory waterfowl. The virus is shed through droppings or nasal discharge of an infected bird. The environment (soil, dust) is then contaminated with the virus. HPAI virus is extremely contagious and can then be spread to susceptible wild birds, those in captivity or housed outdoors and causes severe disease and even death.

People can carry the virus on porous materials such as shoes, clothes, equipment and vehicles. Lake Metroparks' Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center appreciates your cooperation by stepping through our disinfecting footbaths before entering the Wildlife Center building and our animal yard. We are taking every measure to ensure the safety of our resident birds.

Does it affect people?

No human infections have been detected from AI in the United States. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), considers the current HPAI H5 strain to pose a low risk of infection to humans. No documented cases of avian influenza virus transmission directly from wild birds to people exist. Avian influenza is not a food safety concern and no birds infected with HPAI will enter the food chain.

What should I do if I think I found a sick bird?

If you find a sick and/or injured bird, please call the Lake Metroparks Wildlife Hotline at 440-256-1404 x2131. Due to Ohio Department of Agriculture regulations, we are unable to accept waterfowl for care at the center at this time.

Sick birds or unusual bird deaths in one location should be reported to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health at 1-614-728-6220.

If you notice more than six dead wild birds, report it to the Ohio Division of Wildlife at 1-800-WILDLIFE.

For more information:

Ohio Division of Wildlife: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/species-and-habitats/diseases-in-wildlife>

Ohio Department of Agriculture: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/animal/>

Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu
USGS National Wildlife Center: www.nwhc.usgs.gov

World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/avian_influenza/en/



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