

## Update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

- Highly Pathogenic Eurasian H5 avian influenza was recently found in wild birds in South & North Carolina.
- The species it was discovered in are migratory waterfowl.
- Because migratory waterfowl in South and North Carolina or birds they encounter migrate through Ohio, precautions should be taken to prevent the potential exposure of both the commercial poultry industry and backyard poultry community birds to high path avian influenza.
- **Biosecurity for backyard poultry includes preventing wild birds from mingling with the flock. Preventative measures include ensuring your domestic birds cannot access areas migrating birds may visit, such as ponds, puddles, other open water sources, pastures, fields, etc. Prevent interaction with other wild birds in your flock using fencing or bird netting.**
- The Ohio Department of Agriculture's Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (ADDL) will test for high path avian influenza in birds suspected of being infected. They would like necropsy specimens submitted via a vet.
- If you get a call from clients regarding sick birds, [CLICK HERE](#) for a list of vets who see poultry in Ohio.
- **Source new birds from reputable sources such as an NPIP approved hatchery.**
- Hunters play an important role in biosecurity. [CLICK HERE](#) for biosecurity tips for hunters.
- USDA APHIS issued the following update on this topic on 1/14/2022:

WASHINGTON, January 14, 2022 – The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed highly pathogenic Eurasian H5 avian influenza (HPAI) in a wild American wigeon in Colleton County, South Carolina.

Eurasian H5 HPAI has not been detected in a wild bird in the United States since 2016. There was a case of HPAI (H7N3) in one commercial meat turkey flock in South Carolina in 2020 due to a North American lineage virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to the general public from HPAI H5 infections to be low. No human infections with Eurasian H5 viruses have occurred in the United States. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F kills bacteria and viruses, including HPAI. Anyone involved with poultry production from the small backyard to the large commercial producer should review their biosecurity activities to assure the health of their birds. APHIS has materials about biosecurity, including videos, checklists, and a toolkit available at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-resources/df-resources>

The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world, and USDA is working with its partners to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets, and in migratory wild bird populations. APHIS Wildlife Services collected the sample from the hunter-harvested American wigeon, and it was initially tested at the Clemson Veterinary Diagnostic Center (a member of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network). The presumptive positive samples were then sent to APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) for confirmatory testing.

Since wild birds can be infected with these viruses without appearing sick, people should minimize direct contact with wild birds by using gloves. If contact occurs, wash your hands with soap and water, and change clothing before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds. Hunters should dress game birds in the field whenever possible and practice good biosecurity to prevent any potential disease spread. Biosecurity information is available at: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/2015/fsc\\_hpai\\_hunters.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2015/fsc_hpai_hunters.pdf).

In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State/Federal officials, either through their state veterinarian or through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593. Additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks can be found at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.

