

Governor Phil Murphy

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Confirmed in Essex County Live Bird Market

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TRENTON – The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s (NJDA) Division of Animal Health have confirmed a new Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) poultry case in an Essex County live bird market. The disease response is being coordinated between State and Federal partners.

The risk of HPAI to the general public remains low, and no live poultry were sold to the public that may have been infected. HPAI is highly contagious and often fatal in domestic poultry species.

State and Federal partners are taking prompt action to prevent the spread of disease. Depopulation of nearly 123 birds is underway at the market. After cleaning and disinfection, the market will remain temporarily closed for a prescribed period before the quarantine is lifted and they are restocked.

Individuals working in the markets are being assessed for exposures and will be monitored for symptoms by the local health department and New Jersey Department of Health. If any of the exposed individuals develop compatible symptoms, they will be evaluated for HPAI immediately.

Poultry owners, industry workers, and the general public are reminded to take precautionary measures to ensure the maintenance of a healthy flock.

HPAI poses a low risk to the general public and human infections have most often occurred after close or lengthy unprotected contact (such as not wearing gloves, respiratory protection, or eye protections) with infected birds or dairy cattle, or with places that the infected birds or animals have touched. No instances of sustained human-to-human transmission have been observed. Properly cooked poultry and eggs to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit are also considered safe to eat.

Individuals who have had close, unprotected contact with infected birds should monitor themselves for symptoms for 10 days following their last exposure. Symptoms may include fever, respiratory signs (cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing) eye redness or irritation, headaches, muscle or body aches, and diarrhea. If symptoms develop, individuals should seek healthcare and notify their healthcare provider of the potential exposure.

HPAI is highly contagious and often fatal in domestic poultry species. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern.

Signs of HPAI in poultry can include:

- Sudden death
- Decrease in feed or water consumption
- Respiratory signs such as coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge
- Swelling around the eyes
- Open-mouth breathing
- Darkening of the comb/wattles
- Reddening of the shanks or feet
- Decreased egg production
- Lethargy

HPAI spreads through contact with bodily secretions, including feces, ocular, nasal, or oral secretions from infected birds. The virus can spread on vehicles, equipment, shoes, etc. Practicing good biosecurity can help prevent the spread of HPAI onto a farm.

Those biosecurity practices include:

- Eliminating exposure of domestic birds to wild birds. Minimizing standing water and extra feed in the environment that might attract wild birds.
- Avoiding contact with other poultry.
- Keeping a specific set of shoes and clothing for tending to poultry. Disposable boot covers or a foot bath that is changed regularly are other measures that can be used.
- Minimizing the number of people who visit the birds.
- Avoiding sharing equipment with other flocks and using appropriate disinfectants for equipment that must come onto a farm.
- PPE is available at each county's Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office. The county office contact information can be found at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/county/> (<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/county/>).

HPAI is a reportable disease. Any individual who gains knowledge or suspects the existence of the disease in poultry/birds should notify this office without delay. Deceased birds suspected of having Avian Influenza should be double-bagged and stored appropriately for testing. Do not expose dead poultry to the environment, other poultry, or wildlife/wild birds. Wash your hands after handling sick or dead birds.

If you suspect HPAI in livestock, please alert the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400.



If you suspect HPAI in a human, contact the local health department. Local health department information can be found at

www.localhealth.nj.gov

([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/ry1f7m/nrddit/bqkk3bb_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbAIPORYqjZO1kxq9xsG8nGMBRL12x5YGy7Hzjlq1mWWIoYsX-EflwlnPbpYBHV-EQ8XFRrgzDWVs4BZSSi1_2lhvURg5Kb\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/ry1f7m/nrddit/bqkk3bb_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbAIPORYqjZO1kxq9xsG8nGMBRL12x5YGy7Hzjlq1mWWIoYsX-EflwlnPbpYBHV-EQ8XFRrgzDWVs4BZSSi1_2lhvURg5Kb$)).

For additional information about the disease and outreach materials, go to:

- <https://www.nj.gov/H5N1/> (<https://www.nj.gov/H5N1/>)
- <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/> (<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/>)
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/ai> (<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/ai>)

Multiple Agencies Continue to Monitor HPAI in Wild Bird Populations

Multiple state and federal agencies continue to monitor the recent outbreak of wild bird deaths in various parts of the state attributable to avian influenza; however, the state is seeing a downward trend in both individuals reported and suspected cases. The resurgence began in December and is believed to have impacted various species of wild birds in all counties, including but not limited to waterfowl, raptors, and scavenger birds.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Fish & Wildlife and the USDA's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service continues to work with local officials, providing guidance on safe removal and disposal of dead birds in the wild suspected of having avian influenza. At this time, it is unlikely that every bird will be tested for avian influenza. In most cases, officials presume the virus is tied to bird die-offs based on previous preliminary positive test results.

New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife recommends avoiding contact with sick or dead wildlife. However, if you have a dead wild bird on your property and are electing to dispose of the carcass, precautions should be taken. If removal can be done safely, personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn, including gloves, a mask, and eye protection. Avoid direct contact between you and the animal by using a tool such as a shovel or pitchfork to move the carcass. Double-bag each bird, close the bag using a zip-tie, and place in an outdoor trash bin inaccessible by pets or other wildlife. Following disposal, immediately wash your hands with soap and warm water and disinfect any non-disposable items using a diluted household bleach solution. Allow the disinfectant to sit on the item for 10 minutes prior to rinsing off with warm water.

If you see sick or dead birds, particularly in groups of five or more, please report your finding in the

[Wild Bird Disease Reporting Form](https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/749040214c974bb88c89c58483a51ab8?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). (https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/749040214c974bb88c89c58483a51ab8?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

It should be noted that wild birds, including waterfowl and shorebirds, are considered natural reservoirs for avian influenza. Since the beginning of the U.S. outbreak in January 2022, avian influenza has impacted wild and domestic birds in every state. Occurrences can be monitored here:

[USDA APHIS | 2022 Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/h5n1-hpai#detections-hpai) (<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/h5n1-hpai#detections-hpai>).

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