

News Release

Nevada Department of Wildlife

For Immediate Release

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Confirmed in Wild Bird Populations

Reno, NV— The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), in coordination with the USDA, has confirmed Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in wild bird populations in Nevada. HPAI is a contagious virus that mostly circulates in wild waterfowl without any signs of illness and low mortality rates. Due to the contagious nature of HPAI, it likely already exists in wild waterfowl populations throughout the state.

Some birds, including bird of prey species (owls, raptors, eagles), grouse, and domestic birds, such as backyard and commercial chickens, can have very high mortality rates, reaching up to 95% in domestic chickens. In addition, cases have occurred in various mammal species and all mammals should be considered potentially susceptible.

“HPAI typically doesn’t have much of an impact on the overall population of waterfowl,” said NDOW Wildlife Veterinarian Nate LaHue. “However, with waterfowl hunting seasons approaching, we encourage hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts to take proper precautions to keep themselves and their pets safe and help prevent the spread of HPAI to domestic birds.”

HPAI has been detected throughout the U.S. since December 2021, and in July 2022, the USDA and Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) confirmed the [first case of the virus in Nevada](#) in a backyard flock of domestic birds in Carson City. Since then, the disease has been confirmed in multiple geese and ducks in Reno, in bird of prey species across western Nevada, and during routine surveillance of waterfowl in western Nevada. The current strain of the virus appears to pose a low risk for human infection, but those who work with wild birds, especially waterfowl, are at higher risk of exposure and should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Nevada Department of Wildlife

Western Region - 1100 Valley Road Reno, NV 89512 / (775) 688-1506
Eastern Region - 60 Youth Center Road Elko, NV 89801 / (775) 777-2300
Southern Region – 3373 Pepper Lane Las Vegas, NV 89120 / (702) 486-5127

To keep yourself, pets, and domestic poultry safe there are some simple steps you can follow.

Hunters are encouraged to:

- Never handle, consume, or bring home sick or dead waterfowl.
- Harvest only birds that appear and act healthy.
- Wear gloves and eye protection when cleaning birds and do so in a well-ventilated area.
- Remove intestines and discard soon after harvesting and avoid direct contact with them.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling carcasses.
- Wash hands after handling game and clean equipment.
- Cook all game to an internal temperature of 165F before consuming.

If you are planning to hunt in Canada, please see recent transport restrictions for harvested wild birds at the following link:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2022/canada-wild-bird-game-carcasses

Other information for everyone to keep in mind includes:

- Contact NDOW at 775-688-1500 if you notice sick birds or unusual levels mortality of ducks or other birds.
- Sick birds can be found in urban or rural settings and HPAI can be carried and passed on to other animals.
- Dogs and other mammals may be susceptible to HPAI:
 - Do not let your dog come into contact with sick birds or dead birds that you have not harvested.
 - Do not let your dog consume raw meat including from waterfowl.
 - If your dog becomes ill, seek veterinary care and mention that you have been hunting with your dog.

If you have domestic birds, especially backyard poultry, you can help keep yourself and your birds safe by following the precautions outlined by NDA at

agri.nv.gov/Animals/Avian/. Quarantine sick birds immediately and report to the USDA (866) 536-7593 or NDA Animal Disease Lab at 775-353-3709 or entrypermits@agri.nv.gov.

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The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) protects, restores, and manages fish and wildlife, and promotes fishing, hunting, and boating safety. NDOW's wildlife and habitat conservation efforts are primarily funded by sportsmen's license and conservation fees and a federal surcharge on hunting and fishing gear. Support wildlife and habitat conservation in Nevada by purchasing a hunting, fishing, or combination license. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, or visit us at ndow.org.

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) mission is to preserve, protect and promote Nevada's agriculture. The department has 225 dedicated employees providing services in its five divisions, Administrative Services, Animal Industry, Measurement Standards, Food and Nutrition, and Plant Health and Compliance. The department's \$288 million budget facilitates regulatory and administrative work in agriculture and food manufacturing industries, protecting public and environmental health and worker safety, and providing food distribution and oversight for the United States Department of Agriculture's school and community nutrition programs.

Steps for the public to take:

- Contact NDOW at 775-688-1500 if you notice sick birds or unusual levels mortality of ducks or other birds.
- Sick birds can be found in urban or rural settings and HPAI can be carried and passed on to other animals, so avoid feeding wild birds.
- If you do come into contact with birds, wash your hands immediately after.
- Dogs and other mammals may be susceptible to HPAI:
 - Do not let your dog come into contact with sick birds or dead birds.
 - Do not let your dog consume raw meat including from waterfowl.
 - If your dog becomes ill, seek veterinary care and mention that you have been hunting with your dog.
- Recommendations specific to hunters can be found here: [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Confirmed In Wild Bird Populations - NDOW](#)
- The Nevada Department of Agriculture has precautions for domestic bird owners here: [Avian\(1\) \(nv.gov\)](#)

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