

# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Has Been Confirmed in San Diego County

Avian influenza or bird flu refers to the disease caused by infection with avian (bird) influenza (flu) Type A viruses. These viruses naturally spread among wild aquatic birds worldwide and can infect domestic poultry and other bird and animal species. Bird flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with bird flu viruses have occurred.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on Oct. 18, 2022, confirmed a HPAI positive in San Diego County.

## **How is the disease spread?**

Migratory waterfowl are carriers of recent AI virus strains that have infected poultry. Influenza primarily spreads by contact between infected and healthy birds, through contact with contaminated equipment and materials, or by people carrying the virus on their shoes, clothes, and/ or hands. The virus is present in feces and in secretions from the nose, mouth, and eyes of infected birds. Contact with infected fecal material is the most common method of bird-to-bird transmission. The AI virus can also spread in the air between birds in a poultry house, moved between poultry properties on contaminated objects or clothing, and on unwashed eggs.

## **What are the signs of HPAI?**

Clinical signs of HPAI can vary. In general, signs develop within 3-21 days after exposure and may include:

- Sudden death and increased mortality in a flock
- Neurological signs (tremors of head and neck, inability to stand, paralysis)
- Low appetite, lethargy and diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing, sneezing, nasal discharge and coughing
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, neck and hocks
- Purple discoloration of legs

### **What protective actions should you take around wild birds?**

Avoid direct contact with wild birds and observe them only from a distance, if possible.

### **What if I find a dead bird or wildlife?**

Do not handle sick or dead wildlife. If it is necessary to do so, it is recommended to wear impermeable gloves and use an inverted plastic bag, shovel or other tool, and double bag deceased animal. Afterward, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, and change clothes before having contact with domestic or pet birds.

### **How do I report sick or dead wildlife?**

Contact the appropriate organization if you encounter sick or deceased wildlife:

- The public may report dead wild birds using the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) [mortality reporting form](#).
- Sick and dead poultry may be reported to the CDFA hotline at 866-922-2473.

### **Where can I find more information?**

[Bird Flu Current Situation Summary | Avian Influenza \(Flu\) \(cdc.gov\)](#)

[Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\) \(ca.gov\)](#)