



DEPARTMENT OF  
**WILDLIFE RESOURCES**  
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## AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI) IN VIRGINIA

RICHMOND, VA — The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) continues to monitor the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) this year in wild bird populations. HPAI is caused by infection with an influenza virus. It can cause significant illness and death in domestic poultry. Waterfowl, and some shorebird and sea bird species, often do not show any signs of illness when infected. However, these species can still transmit the virus to other birds that may get sick or die from the infection, including domestic poultry, raptors, wild turkey, quail, and grouse. For wild birds in Virginia this year, HPAI has been detected in seven species of waterfowl and raptors. Vultures have been particularly susceptible to HPAI due to their tendency to feed on carcasses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the transmission risk of avian influenza from wild birds, backyard birds, and commercial poultry to people to be low (see CDC web link below for more information). However, the public is advised to not pick up or handle dead wild birds. If you need to handle or dispose of bird carcasses, wear rubber gloves and other personal protective equipment such as a mask and eye protection, then bury or incinerate the carcass, or double bag the carcass and dispose of it in a landfill. Then wash your clothes and disinfect your shoes if you will be in contact with any backyard poultry or other birds, so you reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Additional information for migratory bird hunters and wildlife rehabilitators for handling waterfowl can be found at our DWR website (<https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/avian-influenza/>).

The public can help monitor this emerging wildlife health issue. Please notify DWR via the Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline at 855-571-9003 if you observe one of the following wild bird occurrences:

- Five or more dead vultures, waterfowl, shorebirds, or seabirds found in the same area within five days
- Sick or dead eagles, hawks, owls, or turkey, excluding carcasses found on the road
- Ten or more dead birds in the same area for any other wild bird species

### Additional Resources:

- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Guidance for State Wildlife Agencies to Reduce the Risk of HPAI Transmission in Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities: <https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/2816/4943/1891/AFWA2022HPAIWildlifeRehabGuidance-April2022.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevention and Treatment of Avian Influenza A Viruses in People: [cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/prevention.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/prevention.htm)
- Center for Food Security and Public Health, Avian Influenza: [cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/highly\\_pathogenic\\_avian\\_influenza.pdf](https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/highly_pathogenic_avian_influenza.pdf)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2022 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza: [aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, VS/WS, Guidance for Hunters – Protect Yourself and Your Birds from Avian Influenza: [aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/2015/fsc\\_hpai\\_hunters.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2015/fsc_hpai_hunters.pdf)