



### [Collection of Avian Influenza-Impacted Wildlife in Delaware Expanded Through DNREC-USDA Wildlife Services Effort](#)

*Hunters and Wildlife Watchers Encountering Dead or Sick Wild Birds, Especially Snow Geese, Are Advised to Report Location to DNREC*

**DOVER, Del. (Jan. 22, 2025)** – The Delmarva Avian Influenza Joint Information Center announced today that the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services are collaborating to collect sick and deceased snow geese and other wild birds that may have succumbed to the outbreak of avian influenza currently spreading throughout the state. The expanded statewide collection effort to help track the bird flu is funded through DNREC and the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA).

Sick or dead wild animals found in Delaware during the avian influenza outbreak or at any time of year, are to be [reported to the DNREC Wildlife Section](#). Reporting deceased or ill wildlife does not guarantee that DNREC and APHIS Wildlife Services will respond to every report, only that a DNREC or APHIS Wildlife Services representative will assess the report, and if additional information is needed, may make follow-up contact.

State authorities also reiterated that the public should not pick up or handle any sick birds. Dead birds should not be picked up unless disposable plastic gloves are worn to handle them. This guidance also applies to waterfowl hunters – as the DNREC Wildlife Section has been made aware of hunters examining their harvest then moving ducks or geese to a game bag or carrying strap without following recommended precautions for wild birds that might have contracted avian influenza.

- Anyone encountering sick or dead wild birds on private or public property should report their findings immediately to State authorities.

- Report sightings of sick or dead wild birds through the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife's [sick, injured or dead wildlife reporting form](#).
  - Notify DDA if you find sick or dead poultry on your farm at [poultry.health@delaware.gov](mailto:poultry.health@delaware.gov).
- If a resident finds a dead wild bird on their property and wants to remove it themselves, they should wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, a mask, and safety glasses, to dispose of it. Double-bag each dead bird found, zip-tie the bag and put it in the trash bin for pickup and disposal at a Delaware Solid Waste Authority landfill. Residents are also advised to carefully remove and dispose of all PPE in the dedicated trash bags and always wash their hands afterward.
- Additionally, waterfowl hunters [are advised to follow more focused protocols from APHIS](#) for handling and field dressing any wild fowl they harvest in Delaware during an avian influenza outbreak.

Avian influenza is a highly contagious airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among birds through nasal and eye secretions and manure. Snow geese, which are waterfowl, are known to migrate from the Arctic and form large flocks in Delaware each winter. Due to close contact with thousands of other snow geese while feeding and roosting, they can get sick and die. It is unknown when or where the snow geese may have acquired the virus given their highly migratory nature and association with other waterfowl and waterbirds throughout the Atlantic Flyway through which they travel into Delaware and more southern states.

While the H5N1 virus has infected a small number of people across the U.S., there is no documented transmission of the virus between people in this country. Though the continued testing of people in close contact with animals infected with HPAI indicates a low risk to the general public's health, children and pets should be kept away from wild birds and bird droppings.

If anyone in contact with wild birds or poultry begins to experience flu-like symptoms, please contact the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 888-295-5156 (after hours) or 302-744-4990 (business hours) for a referral to a DPH clinic to obtain a flu swab test. Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, congestion, body aches, fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea. If symptoms seem severe, including trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, dizziness/confusion, severe muscle pain, seizure, severe weakness or unsteadiness, worsening of chronic medical conditions, or fever or cough that begin to improve and then worsen or return, please dial 911 or visit the emergency department. Let hospital staff and providers know if you have been exposed to poultry or wild birds.

For more information about avian influenza impacting wildlife, visit [the DNREC website](#).

For more information on avian influenza and the State poultry industry, visit [de.gov/poultry](http://de.gov/poultry).

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**Media Contacts:**

All media inquiries related to avian influenza should be directed to the Delmarva Avian Influenza Joint Information Center at [JIC@delaware.gov](mailto:JIC@delaware.gov).