

## Bird Flu – Information for Hunters and Taxidermists

Avian influenza, or bird flu, is a virus that causes disease in chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, and geese. It may also cause disease in other birds as well. There are many types of avian flu, and some forms are worse than others. H5N1 is a form of bird flu that is currently in Asia, Africa,



Europe, and the Middle East. It is the worst known outbreak of bird flu in domestic birds. H5N1 is a fatal disease in domestic poultry. H5N1 is easily passed from bird to bird. To date, the H5N1 virus has not been found in North America.

The bird flu virus is spread via the bodily fluids and feces of infected birds. Wild birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds, are natural hosts for the virus. They may not show signs of the disease, even if infected. Some of the other species which may be able to catch the bird flu virus include pigs, primates, ferrets, rodents, rabbits, cats, and humans.

Migratory birds travel between North America and parts of the world where H5N1 has been seen. Government agencies are trying to watch wild birds for the virus. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife will sample 500 birds during the 2006-07 migration period. It is unknown if migratory birds can spread H5N1 to North America.

The risks to hunters and taxidermists are minimal. They can help protect against bird flu as well as other diseases and parasites by taking the following precautions:

- Limit exposure to feces and bodily fluids from game animals.
- Do not handle or process birds found sick or dead.
- Wear rubber or latex gloves and washable clothing while handling game.
- Dispose of internal organs, feathers, bones, skin, and trimmings in a safe manner by double bagging, sealing both bags, and putting it in the trash.
- Do not eat, drink, or use tobacco products while handling game.
- Wash hands with hot soapy water or alcohol wipes immediately after handling game.
- Clean all tools and work surfaces with hot soapy water then disinfect with 10% chlorine bleach solution or other disinfectant.
- Thoroughly cooked meat is safe to eat. Poultry should reach an internal temperature of at least 165° F. Use a meat thermometer.
- Use caution around water sources and roosting areas where feces from wild birds may accumulate.
- When finished hunting, clean clothing, boots, vehicles, etc. as soon as possible.
- Do not bring game birds onto poultry farms.



Call the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife at (866) 4US-DAWS or the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife at (800) 858-1549 ext. 352 to report sick or dead wild birds. Because waterfowl are the greatest risk, call to report any number of sick or dead waterfowl. For any other type of wild bird, only call to report if there are 5 or more birds.

Anthony Pescatore, Poultry Specialist; Ricky Yeagan, Extension Associate; Andrea Husband, Program Coordinator for Agroterrorism and Disaster Preparedness. June 2006.

Adapted for use in Kentucky from: Alaska Department of Fish and Game. [http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/Regs%20-%2004%20pages/ADFG%20\\_H5N1\\_HunterFlyer2005.pdf](http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/Regs%20-%2004%20pages/ADFG%20_H5N1_HunterFlyer2005.pdf). Accessed on May 11, 2006.

Information contained in this document is accurate as of the date of the last update. Document last updated on: August 9, 2006. For more information about pandemic flu, visit the University of Kentucky Pandemic Flu webpage at <http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/pandemicflu/>.

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