



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, Dec. 20, 2024

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## **IDNR, IDPH, and IDOA monitoring avian influenza mortality events in waterfowl throughout Illinois**

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is monitoring a large event of waterfowl mortality at numerous locations throughout Illinois. Test results received so far indicate highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is the cause.

The public is reminded to not handle or attempt to capture waterfowl or other wild birds displaying signs of illness.

IDNR will continue to monitor for HPAI mortality events throughout the state during the seasonal bird migration. Members of the public are encouraged to report concentrations of **five or more** deceased birds found at **one** location to IDNR district wildlife biologists [by going online](#).

Due to risk of infection to other animals, dogs and other pets should be kept away from the carcasses of birds that may have died from HPAI. If carcasses need to be disposed of, IDNR recommends following guidance from the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) (IDPH). IDNR is unable to assist with carcass removal from non-IDNR properties in most situations.

Local animal control agencies should also take similar precautions and follow the guidelines above in disposing of dead birds. In addition, IDPH recommends:

- Do not send dying or dead birds to veterinarians, wildlife refuges, etc., for testing. Instead, notify [your local health department](#) or alert [IDNR wildlife biologists](#) in cases of five or more deceased birds found in one location.
- People can get on antiviral medications after exposures to prevent illness.
- If the public develops any symptoms of the “flu” – fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, body aches, headaches, eye redness, vomiting or diarrhea – after exposure to sick or dead birds, please notify the local health department immediately. Upon seeking medical attention, please let any health care facility know of your exposure.
- Treatment must be started within two days of illness for it to be most effective, so the public is urged to not delay seeking care.

“While avian influenza generally poses a low risk to the population, it is essential to take the necessary steps to avoid exposure, and to seek treatment quickly if you are exposed,” said **IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra**. “We encourage all Illinoisans to follow the advice of the experts at IDNR in order to avoid contact with sick birds, and to take any potential exposure seriously. These common-sense steps can help reduce the likelihood of spreading this illness.”

IDNR recommends that wildlife rehabilitators not accept waterfowl and other aquatic birds because of the elevated risk of infection by HPAI at this time. Caution should also be taken when accepting raptors, scavengers, and other birds displaying signs of illness due to risk of exposure to HPAI. Further guidance for wildlife rehabilitators regarding HPAI can be found [online](#).

The Department reminds waterfowl hunters to take precautions and thoroughly cook game meat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Avoid handling sick or dead waterfowl found in the field. Further guidance for hunters can be found [online](#).

In addition to detections in wild birds, Illinois and other states across the United States have seen detections in poultry.

“The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) encourages poultry owners to be aware of the risk, increase biosecurity measure and prevent contact with wild birds,” **said Dr. Mark Ernst, IDOA state veterinarian**. “In addition, we encourage poultry owners to report unusually large mortalities in their flocks and to be aware of IDPH’s recommendations regarding exposure to sick birds.”

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