



PRESS RELEASE

Community Health Advisory



October 9th, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detection of Avian Influenza in Wild Geese in Whitman County

Current Situation

Avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, has been detected for the first time this fall in wild geese in Whitman County.

Although human infections with avian influenza are rare, unprotected exposure to infected animals or environments where infected animals have been present increases the risk of infection. People with job-related or recreational exposures to infected birds or other infected animals are at higher risk and should take precautions.

Alert Categories



Community Health Alert

Warrants immediate action & attention.



Community Health Advisory

May not require immediate action.



Community Health Update

No immediate action necessary.



Community Health News

No immediate action necessary.

Actions Requested

Do not approach or handle sick or dead wildlife. Report sick or dead wild animals to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) using their [online reporting form](#). Sick or dead domestic birds can be reported to the Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) Sick Bird Hotline at 1-800-606-3056.

Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when in close contact (within 6 feet) with sick or dead wild or domestic animals or contaminated environments—including enclosed spaces where such animals are present. Recommended PPE:

- NIOSH-approved respirator (e.g. N95)
- Disposable gloves
- Hair cover
- Properly fitted, unvented or indirectly vented, safety goggles
- Fluid-resistant coveralls
- Rubber boots or boot covers

For cleaning bird feces outdoors, wear gloves and disinfect with 1:10 bleach solution or a benzalkonium chloride-based cleaner (e.g., Lysol). Soak area for 5–10 minutes, wipe with disposable cloths, and discard in a sealed trash can. Wash hands thoroughly.

Avoid consuming or feeding pets raw or undercooked food, including unpasteurized milk, raw cheeses, or raw pet food. Cook wild game and other animal products thoroughly.

Hunters should wear PPE when handling, field dressing, or processing wild game. Avoid direct contact with bodily fluids, and do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling carcasses. Clean tools and surfaces with disinfectant. Wash hands thoroughly after handling animals.

Background

A strain of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been circulating in wild birds around the world and was first detected in the U.S. in January 2022. This avian influenza strain can pass from wild birds to domestic birds, including commercial poultry and backyard flocks. Occasionally, HPAI can be transmitted to wild mammals. Domestic pets can be infected with HPAI. Cats are especially susceptible to disease and may experience severe symptoms if infected. Never allow domestic animals to scavenge sick or dead birds or other wildlife.

HPAI was first identified in Washington state in wild birds in March 2022 and in a backyard flock in May 2022. The first human cases of H5 avian influenza were reported in Washington state in October 2024.

To date, there is no evidence of person-to-person transmission of avian influenza in Washington state.

Resources

- [Avian Influenza Fact Sheet | WCPH](#)
- [How to Prepare for a Healthy Family & Flock | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Bird Flu Webpage | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#)
- [Bird Flu Webpage | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- [Online Reporting Form for Sick/Dead Animals | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

Questions or Concerns?

We're here to help.

For questions or further information, please contact the Disease Prevention Program at Whitman County Public Health via email at DiseasePrevention@whitmancounty.gov

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