

Biosecurity Measures for MD Wild Bird Facilities
During the 2024 High Path Avian Influenza Outbreak

BACKGROUND

-High Path Avian Influenza (HPAI) is currently circulating in Maryland and North American wild and domestic birds (see USDA website below for current map and list of species affected).

-Wild sick birds *may* show respiratory or neurologic signs (circling, seizures, star gazing, etc.) that cannot be attributed to other, more common conditions such as trauma.

-Transmission is from direct contact between birds via secretions or feces, or indirectly through contact with contaminated manure/ vehicles/ equipment/ clothing.

-The virus remains viable in the environment for long periods, especially in cold, wet climates, but can be disinfected (see list of EPA-registered disinfectants under RESOURCES).

-HPAI is a Foreign Animal Disease and must be reported to USDA.

-The CDC indicates that the risk to people is considered low.

(For additional general information on HPAI consult the RESOURCES section)

BIOSECURITY

During the 2024 HPAI outbreak – extreme caution is necessary for wild bird facilities. The following recommendations are suggestions for your safety and for the biosecurity of your facility.

Human safety:

-Wear appropriate PPE – gloves, mask, eye protection, as needed, etc., to protect staff.

-Wash hands frequently and provide hand sanitizing stations.

-Do not eat, smoke or chew gum around birds.

-Consider getting vaccinated for seasonal flu.

-If you develop flu-like symptoms – contact your physician.

Facility Biosecurity:

-Always maintain a detailed history and daily records for birds in your facility (origin/ location, date, species, age), and daily food intake, health care, etc.

-Use footbaths at entrance points of the facility (and change footbath fluids daily).

-Consider covering the roof of outdoor bird enclosures or move birds indoors to prevent free-ranging wild bird interactions.

-Keep captive wild bird contact separate from personnel-owned backyard poultry. Consider limiting the use of personnel that own backyard birds at their residence.

-Keep facility / bird handling clothing separate from home/ personal clothing (or wear coveralls).

- Do not add new birds or move birds in your collection until HPAI is no longer a threat to our area (few weeks).
- Do not take any birds out of the facility and do not add any new birds until the HPAI threat has passed.
- Restrict public visitation at your facility, postpone educational bird visits to schools, and restrict public bird exhibitions or club gatherings.
- For daily patient feeding and treatments - always treat sick birds last / clean affected bird cages last.
- Remove bulk caging material (double-bag for disposal) and then disinfect caging/ equipment daily with dilute/10% bleach or EPA-registered disinfectant (see list under RESOURCES).
- Isolate sick birds. If a bird has neurologic signs that cannot be explained by head trauma or other causes and consider euthanasia (especially for raptors, scavengers, waterfowl).
- If an HPAI-suspect bird mortality occurs; double-bag, label, disinfect outer bag and refrigerate. If the bird carcass cannot be delivered to a lab within 1-2 days, freeze carcasses and contact the MDA if needed.
- Biosecurity is essential to preventing disease.* If a bird in your facility tests HPAI positive your facility may be placed under a quarantine order and closed for a 3 to 4-week quarantine period – thus strict biosecurity measures should be followed to *prevent* infections and closures.

RESOURCES

NWHC- AI General Information

<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc/science/avian-influenza>

US EPA/ USDA Disinfectants

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>

USDA - AI General Information

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-resources/df-resources>

USDA HPAI Current Locations in U.S. Wild Birds

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/wild-birds>

USDA HPAI Current Locations in U.S. Domestic Birds

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/commercial-backyard-flocks>

CDC HPAI - Human Health Information

<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/index.html>

STATE AGENCY PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

- MDA: 410-841-5810 <https://mda.maryland.gov/animalhealth/pages/default.aspx>
Avian Flu: <https://mda.maryland.gov/Pages/AvianFlu.aspx>
- MDH: 410-767-6500 <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Pages/Home.aspx>
County Health Offices: <https://health.maryland.gov/Pages/departments.ASPX>
- MD DNR: 410-260-8540; field offices: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/regionaloffices.aspx>
- MEMA: 410-517-3600 or 877-636-2872 <https://mdem.maryland.gov/Pages/home-12345.aspx>
- MDE: 866-633 4686 <https://mde.maryland.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

USDA WS - FEDERAL AGENCY PHONE NUMBER AND WEBSITE (to report illness or death in HPAI-suspect free-ranging wild birds)

- USDA WS in Maryland: 410-349-8055 or 877-463-6497