



# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or “Bird Flu” in Birds: Who to Contact and How to Protect Yourself

HPAI or “bird flu” is an emerging public and animal health threat. You may have questions regarding what to do and how to best protect yourself and others if you encounter sick or dead wild birds or poultry. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), and Ohio Department of Health (ODH), have designed this document to provide contact information and resources for reporting sick or dead birds and steps to keep yourself safe.

## If You Encounter Sick or Dead Birds

### Report

For sick or dead wild birds:

- Contact **ODNR at 800-WILDLIFE (945-3543)** for:
  - o Any raptor (such as bald eagle).
  - o Multiple waterfowl such as geese or ducks.
  - o Any other large congregation of sick or dead birds.
- Submit a Diseased/Dead Bird Report via the **ODNR [Wildlife Reporting Tool](#)** to report any other sick or dead wild birds.

For sick or dead poultry, call and ask for the sick bird coordinator:

- Backyard/hobby flocks: contact **ODA at 614-728-6220 or after hours at 888-456-3405**.
- Commercial poultry flocks: contact the **Ohio Poultry Association at 614-882-6111**.

For any questions or concerns about potentially infected domestic pets, please contact your veterinarian. Please note that your local health department and ODH have no jurisdiction over any potentially infected animals.

### Protect Yourself

When possible, avoid direct/close contact with sick or dead wild birds or poultry, their feces or litter, or any surfaces that might be contaminated with their saliva, feces, or any other bodily fluids.

If you must have direct/close contact with sick or dead wild birds or poultry, or their environment:

- Wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE). In general, PPE should include:
  - o Safety goggles (unvented or indirectly vented) that fit snugly.
  - o Gloves that are disposable.
  - o Rubber boots (or waterproof boots that can be disinfected) or boot covers.
  - o An N95 respirator if available, or, if not available, a well-fitting facemask (e.g., a surgical mask).
  - o Coveralls that are disposable and fluid-resistant.
  - o Disposable head cover or hair cover.
  - o You can buy these items online or at many retail, hardware, or feed stores.

- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after contact with birds (or other animals) or after handling materials that may have been in contact with them.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after touching birds (or other animals).
- Change your clothing after handling sick birds and before contact with healthy birds.

If local or state officials advise you to dispose of a dead wild bird, or if you must dispose of a dead wild bird before receiving guidance:

- Wear disposable gloves to pick up the bird's carcass (body).
- If you don't have gloves, turn a plastic bag inside out and use it to pick up the carcass.
- Double bag the carcass and throw it away in your regular trash.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.

For detailed guidance on PPE use, including how to wear, remove, and safely dispose of PPE, please see information for:

- Steps to protect yourself when working with backyard/hobby flocks: [Backyard Flock Owners: Protect Yourself from Bird Flu](#).
- Steps to protect yourself when working with commercial poultry flocks: [Information for Worker's Exposed to H5N1 Bird Flu](#).

For questions about recommended PPE, please contact your [local health department](#).

## Monitor Your Health

In addition to wearing PPE and taking other prevention measures to protect yourself from bird flu, you should monitor your health for symptoms of bird flu while working with sick or dead wild birds or poultry and for 10 days after your last exposure to the birds or their environment.

Monitor yourself daily for symptoms, including:

- Fever.
- Cough.
- Sore throat.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Eye tearing, redness or irritation.
- Headaches.
- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Muscle or body aches.
- Fatigue.

If you develop any of these symptoms you should contact your [local health department](#) and mention your exposure to sick or dead birds or animals. You should also stay at home and avoid contact with others in your household to avoid potentially spreading disease to others. If you need to seek medical care, notify the healthcare facility before you arrive (if possible) of your potential exposure to bird flu so they can best care for you.

## Resources:

- Ohio Department of Health HPAI Webpage.  
[odh.ohio.gov/HPAI](http://odh.ohio.gov/HPAI)
- Ohio Department of Agriculture HPAI Webpage.  
<https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/animal-health/HPAI>
- CDC: Information for Workers Exposed to H5N1 Bird Flu.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/farm-workers.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Interim Guidance for Employers.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/worker-protection-ppe.html>
- CDC: Information for Employers Providing PPE to Reduce Exposure to Avian Influenza.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/employer-provided-ppe.html>
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Protecting Poultry Workers from Avian Influenza (Bird Flu).  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2008-128/default.html>