

Public Health Advisory

Avian influenza reminder and resources

May 30, 2022
Nunavut-wide

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To date, there have been detections of avian influenza in wild and/or domestic birds in all 10 provinces, the Yukon and widespread detections in the United States. With the northward spring bird migration, increasing numbers of avian influenza detections in birds may be seen across Canada.

Avian influenza or bird flu is a viral infection that is highly contagious among birds and is found in domestic poultry and wild birds including raptors, gulls, terns, shorebirds, ducks, geese, and swans. Signs that a bird may have avian influenza include nervousness, trembling or lack of coordination, swelling around the head, neck and eyes, diarrhea or sudden death. Multiple dead birds in one location are a sign that the virus is present.

The risk of avian influenza infection in the general public is considered low. There is no evidence to suggest that the avian influenza virus can be transmitted to humans through the consumption of fully cooked game birds or eggs. In general, human cases of avian influenza are caused **by close, prolonged contact** with infected live or dead poultry or contaminated environments. While the risk of human infection with avian influenza viruses is low, individuals should be cautious when handling wild birds.

As many Nunavummiut actively engage in spring wild bird and egg harvesting, it is important to learn the key precautions that should be taken to limit the spread of disease and minimize risk to people. Guidance on best practices to reduce the risk of human infection has been developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Government of Nunavut and can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/programs/avian-influenza>.

If you notice any unusual death or illness in birds, contact your [local conservation office](#). If you feel very sick after handling a bird, contact your local health centre. For more information, please refer to the Government of Canada's website [here](#).

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