

Avian Influenza Information for Hunters

Visit [USDA: Implementation Plan for Avian Influenza Surveillance in Waterfowl in the U.S.](#)



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health



Avian influenza, or bird flu, is a disease caused by influenza A viruses that usually spread between birds, game birds and waterfowl, not people. In North Carolina, Avian flu has mainly affected waterfowl, raptors such as bald eagles and black vultures, and other waterbirds including gulls, double-crested cormorants, and brown pelicans.

Avian influenza spreads between birds, game birds and waterfowl through direct contact. In rare cases, humans can become sick after being in contact with an infected animal. It can also spread via contaminated surfaces and materials, including people's clothing, shoes, or hands. Follow these recommendations to protect yourself from Avian flu.

When Hunting

- Do not harvest or handle any birds, wild or domestic, that are obviously sick or those other than fresh kill.



- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after handling game.



Spot and Report

Reports of sick/injured wildlife can be made to the **NC Wildlife Resource Commission's Helpline**, Monday-Friday, 8AM-5PM at 1-866-318-2401 or anytime via email at HWI@ncwildlife.org.

When Dressing Birds, Game Birds and Waterfowl

- Always wear disposable gloves when handling or cleaning game. Wash hands with soap and warm water when done.
- Dress game birds in the field whenever possible.
- If you can't dress birds in the field, clean them in a well-ventilated location away from poultry and other birds.
- Keep a separate pair of shoes to wear only in your game cleaning area.



- Use dedicated tools for cleaning game. Do not use those tools around poultry or pet birds.
- Wash all tools and work surfaces with soap and water. Then disinfect them using a freshly mixed chlorine solution consisting of 1/3 cup of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.



1/3 cup

1 gal

- Double bag the entrails and feathers.
- Place the bag in a trash can that poultry and pet birds cannot access. Make sure the trash can is covered so that children, pets, or other animals can't get into it.



Additional Precautions

- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning feeders. Wash hands with soap and water immediately afterward.
- Do not eat, drink, or put anything in your mouth while cleaning or handling game.
- Avoid cross-contamination. Keep uncooked game in a separate container, away from cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
- Cook game meat and poultry thoroughly; internal temperature should reach 165°F.



If you feel sick after handling game

Contact your health care provider, occupational health clinic, or local health department. Tell your provider about any recent animal contact. In case of emergency, call 911.

Monitor for symptoms:

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|
| -Red eyes | -Sore throat | -Shortness of breath | -Sore muscles |
| -Fever | -Runny nose | -Fatigue | -Headache |
| -Cough | -Sneezing | -Vomiting | -Nausea |
| -Rash | -Diarrhea | | -Seizures |