

Does the virus travel easily from birds to humans?

No, the number of people that have become ill with bird flu is very small considering the size and duration of the outbreak among domestic birds and the large number of persons who likely have been exposed. The majority of human infections of "bird flu" have been associated with direct contact with infected poultry or their contaminated environment.

How is an avian influenza outbreak among birds different from an influenza pandemic?

An influenza outbreak among birds occurs when the virus spreads among birds and results in illness among infected birds. Influenza viruses that spread readily among birds can at times infect people, as we have seen in other countries with the current H5N1 bird flu. But "bird flu" viruses do not spread easily among people. If an influenza virus from birds or other animals acquires the ability to spread easily between people, this would represent

the appearance of a new human influenza strain. If this new human influenza virus spread among people around the world, then there could be an influenza pandemic.

What are the signs and symptoms of "bird flu" in ducks and humans?

Ducks most often do not show any signs of illness when infected with H5N1. However, some deaths have been observed among waterfowl found to be infected with Asian H5N1. Humans show signs of respiratory illness, such as fever, cough, sore throat and headache. Rarely, humans have had diarrhea associated with infection. The disease can progress to severe pneumonia, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, and death.

Will the human seasonal influenza virus vaccine protect me against "bird flu"?

No, the human influenza vaccine currently available does not protect against avian influenza viruses. Clinical trials are underway now for a human vaccine to protect against the "bird flu".



Naturally occurring avian influenza viruses in wild birds are generally associated with waterfowl (ducks and geese), gulls, and some species of shore birds and typically do not cause outward signs of illness in these birds.

How can hunters protect themselves from "bird flu"?

Viruses like H5N1 are shed from birds in saliva, respiratory discharges and fecal material, so avoiding contact with these materials while plucking and cleaning birds is a good practice. It is possible that not only the Asian H5N1 virus but also other diseases may be acquired from contact with infected birds. Consequently, hunters should take precautions (see box inside).

Contact Info

Division of Public Health
2 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-657-2588
www.health.ga.us

Where does the information gathered by Georgia DNR from hunter-harvested birds go?

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources contributes, along with other agencies and organizations, to the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Early Detection Data System. This system focuses on migratory birds and organizes data from live and dead wild birds, hunter-harvested birds, sentinel birds, and environmental samples into one database. The U.S. Department of the Interior oversees the involvement of the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with state Departments of Natural Resources and other agencies and organizations. Highly pathogenic Asian H5N1 has not been found by this surveillance system in the U.S. All data gathered is available for viewing at: <http://wildlifedisease.nbii.gov/ai/>.

Duck Hunter Information

Bird Avian Flu Influenza



Division of
Public Health



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH

What kinds of birds does avian influenza infect?

Naturally occurring avian influenza viruses in wild birds are generally associated with waterfowl (ducks and geese), gulls, and some species of shore birds and typically do not cause illness in these birds. The viruses occasionally “jump” from wild birds to domestic birds such as chickens, quail and turkeys, sometimes causing severe disease. This happened with the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus (“bird flu”) which has been circulating in domestic birds at least since 1997. Although this virus probably originated in wild birds, it has mutated and adapted to cause severe illness in domestic poultry.

Do we have avian influenza viruses and “bird flu” in the United States?

Avian influenza viruses are found naturally in wild bird populations in North America and occasionally infect domestic poultry. To date, the highly pathogenic form of H5N1 “bird flu” virus has not been detected in

the U.S. or in North or South America.

What makes the Asian H5N1 strain virus different from other avian influenza viruses?

The Asian H5N1 (“bird flu”) virus has caused deaths in wild birds, and there is evidence that migrating wild birds may have contributed to the spread of the virus in some areas. These observations are very unusual, and many scientific questions remain concerning the role of wild birds in the spread of the Asian H5N1 virus.

What is the risk of Asian H5N1 arriving in Georgia?

The risk of Asian H5N1 infection among birds in Georgia is very low at this time. No poultry or poultry products from countries affected with avian influenza are legally allowed to enter the U.S. If migratory birds in the Atlantic Flyway are infected (see <http://www.pandemicflu.gov> for map of migratory bird Flyways in North America),

wild bird monitoring in Canada and more northern states will likely detect it before Georgia is affected. Travelers from affected countries could possibly introduce the virus to the United States through inadvertent or intentional movement of the Asian H5N1 virus or infected birds.

How have people gotten infected with the Asian H5N1 virus?

Infected birds shed large amounts of virus in their saliva, nasal secretions and feces. Human illness has resulted from direct contact with birds and their feces or with environments heavily contaminated with infected bird feces. Hand butchering sick birds exposes people to high levels of the virus, and this activity has been associated with many of the human illnesses. Widespread human-to-human spread of the H5N1 virus has not occurred. As of February 2008, all human cases of H5N1 infections have been restricted to Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

Hunters should take these precautions:

1. Do not handle birds that are obviously sick or birds found dead.
2. Keep your game birds cool, clean, and dry.
3. Avoid contact between hands and mouth or eyes--do not eat, drink, or smoke while cleaning your birds.
4. Use rubber gloves when cleaning game birds.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol wipes after dressing birds.
6. When possible, fillet the breasts off hunted birds instead of dressing the entire bird.
7. Clean all tools and surfaces immediately afterward; use hot soapy water, then disinfect with a 10% chlorine bleach solution.
8. Cook game meat thoroughly (165°F) to kill disease organisms and parasites.

What is avian influenza and “bird flu”?

Like humans, birds have naturally occurring influenza (flu) viruses. There are many types of avian influenza viruses that are carried by wild birds throughout the world, but these viruses do

not usually cause disease in these birds. “Bird flu” is a non-scientific term that refers to a specific virus (H5N1) that has been present in domestic birds in Asia since 1997, known as the

Asian H5N1 strain. This particular virus has been associated with some human infections and deaths among people who live with or have close contact with infected poultry.