

AVIAN INFLUENZA IN WILD BIRDS

H5 bird flu (also known as avian flu H5N1) is a viral infectious disease found in birds. It is possible for wild birds to be infected and not show any signs of illness. Birds release the virus in bodily fluids such as mucus, saliva, and poop. The virus spreads through direct bird-to-bird contact or indirectly when the virus is on surfaces such as clothing, shoes, vehicles, rodents, insects, feed, water, feathers, etc. The current circulating strain of H5 bird flu is causing outbreaks in poultry, dairy cows in the US, and other animals. The risk of H5 bird flu spreading to people in LA County remains low, but Public Health is closely monitoring the situation.

SIGNS A WILD BIRD IS INFECTED WITH AVIAN FLU

- Causes neurological signs such as swimming in circles, head tilt, tremors, weakness, lack of coordination, and difficulty breathing.
- May cause sudden death.
- Wild birds at highest risk of infection include waterfowl (swans, geese, diving ducks), waterbirds (gulls, terns, cranes, herons, shorebirds), and birds that prey or scavenge on these species such as eagles, hawks, falcons, corvids, and vultures.

REPORT SICK OR DEAD BIRDS

Report sick or dead birds to your local animal control agency. They might be able to collect and hold it for avian flu testing which can help track the disease around LA County. Call 211 to find your local animal control agency.

In addition, let Public Health know about any sick or dead birds through our [online reporting form](#).



DO NOT TOUCH OR HANDLE WILD BIRDS

Follow these best practices to prevent the spread of H5 bird flu.

- Observe wild birds from a distance. Avoid touching, feeding, or coming into contact with wild birds, even if they don't look sick.
- Avoid contact with bird poop or with surfaces that may be contaminated with bird poop.
- Keep pets away from wild birds and their poop.
- Take down bird feeders and bird baths. This reduces spread of the virus between wild birds. It also reduces contamination of the ground/environment with wild bird poop.
- If you encounter a sick or dead bird, contact your local animal control agency for help. Animal control may be able to collect the bird and hold it for testing, which helps track the spread of disease around Los Angeles County.
- If you encounter a sick or dead wild bird at a park or beach, notify a park or beach employee for help.

If you must handle wild birds, avoid any unprotected exposures. Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn when in direct or close contact (within about six feet) with sick or dead wild birds, poop, or materials potentially contaminated with H5 bird flu virus. PPE includes safety goggles/eye protection, disposable gloves, protective clothing, and an N95 mask.