



What you need to know

What is highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)?

Avian influenza (AI), commonly known as “bird flu,” is a contagious viral infection that can affect several species of food producing birds as well as pet birds and wild birds. AI viruses can be classified into two categories: low pathogenicity (LPAI) and high pathogenicity (HPAI) viruses, based on the severity of the illness caused in birds.

HPAI has spread in wild bird populations across the globe and presents a significant national concern as birds migrate to Canada. HPAI has been detected in multiple provinces in Canada — including Saskatchewan.

Clinical signs

- Sudden and rapid increase in the number of birds found dead
- Several birds affected in the same shed or air space
- Swollen head
- Closed and excessively watery eyes
- Lethargy and depression
- Unresponsive and lying down
- Loss of co-ordination and balance
- Head and body tremors
- Drooping of the wings and/or dragging of legs
- Twisting of the head and neck
- Swelling and blue discolouration of comb, wattles and/or legs
- Hemorrhages on shanks of the legs and under the skin of the neck
- Loss of appetite or marked decrease in feed consumption
- Sudden increase or decrease in water consumption
- Respiratory distress such as gaping (mouth breathing), nasal snicking (coughing sound), sneezing, gurgling or rattling
- Fever or noticeable increase in body temperature
- Discoloured or loose, watery droppings
- Cessation or marked reduction in egg production



Birds and mammals that can be affected by avian influenza

Corvids: crows, ravens, jays and magpies

Raptors: hawks, falcons, owls and buzzards

Waterfowl: ducks, geese, pelicans, storks and cranes

Columbidae: doves and pigeons

Mammals: scavenger animals (coyotes, skunks, badgers, foxes and wolves)

Q. What should I do if I see an infected bird?

Leave it alone. Contact the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment Inquiry Centre (1-800-567-4224) or the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (306-966-5815).

Q. What should I do if I find a dead bird?

If you find a dead bird in your yard and it poses a risk to your family or pets, take the deceased bird to Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS) or the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative.



Click on the QR code and follow the shipping and handling instructions.

Visit cwhc-rcsf.ca (click on "Report and Submit")

AFTER HOURS: please call the WCVN Veterinary Medical Centre (306-966-7126). Do not enter the building — someone will meet you at the door.

Q. I've touched a wild bird or wild droppings. What should I do?

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after this cleaning process.
- Complete these steps outside or in a well-ventilated area. Use protective eyewear, face mask and gloves.
- Remove all organic material from contaminated items and place into a bag. When finished cleaning, double bag, rinse with bleach solution and throw away in a regular garbage bin.
- Scrub down area with a bleach solution. Use 25 millilitres of a bleach concentration (five to six per cent) in two litres of water. Let the area thoroughly dry.
- Scrub again with a common household cleaner. Follow label directions.
- Use bleach solution on the bottom of your shoes. Remove and wash all clothing items. It's recommended to shower — especially if you have pet birds within the home.



For more information, please visit the Government of Canada page:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/wildlife-issues/fish-and-wildlife-diseases/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds>

