

# Avian Influenza Fact Sheet

Current as of 4/28/22

## What is Avian Influenza?

The avian influenza virus (also called bird flu) currently in the news is considered a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

## How does the virus spread?

The virus is transferred from bird to bird through mucus, saliva, and feces. Sharing food, water, and perching areas between birds can spread the virus.

## What birds are susceptible?

Chickens, turkey, ducks, geese, and other domestic waterfowl and poultry are susceptible to the disease. Their wild counterparts are also vulnerable. Avian influenza has also been detected in raptors such as owls and hawks and scavengers such as turkey vultures, crows, and blue jays. Songbirds appear to be less susceptible to the virus, but they can be potential carriers and may get sick from it.

## What happens when a bird is infected?

Some birds, like chickens, turkey, and raptors die from infection with the virus in as little as 48 hours. Other birds, such as songbirds, can carry the virus with no symptoms or may not be susceptible to the virus at all.

## Am I at risk?

Avian influenza poses little risk to the general population. It is always best practice to wash your hands with soap and water after handling bird feeders and bird baths. If you are working in close quarters with poultry or waterfowl that have been infected, seek guidance from the CDC or Department of Agriculture.

## How do I report a sick/dead bird?

- Use the Eyes in the Field app from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- Call the DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory at 517-336-5030.

## Can I still feed birds or use a bird bath?

- **If you have a backyard flock of poultry or waterfowl, STOP** using your bird feeders. Bringing songbirds into potential contact with your flock puts your flock at risk.
- **If wild waterfowl and/or turkey gather around your feeders, STOP** using your feeders. The mixing of waterfowl and songbirds can put the waterfowl at risk.
- **If only songbirds are present:**
  - Clean your feeder(s) and bird baths with a 10% bleach solution at least weekly.
  - Rake up dropped seed to keep turkeys and waterfowl away from the area.
  - You may also use hummingbird and oriole feeders as long as they are cleaned regularly.

## How do I get updates on Avian Influenza in Michigan?

Additional information regarding avian influenza, action steps you can take, and how to report a dead bird can be found here: <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/about/newsroom/releases/2022/04/20/temporary-removal-of-bird-feeders>

Please feel free to contact a CNC Naturalist at 989-631-0830 or [info@chippewanaturecenter.org](mailto:info@chippewanaturecenter.org) if you have questions or concerns.