

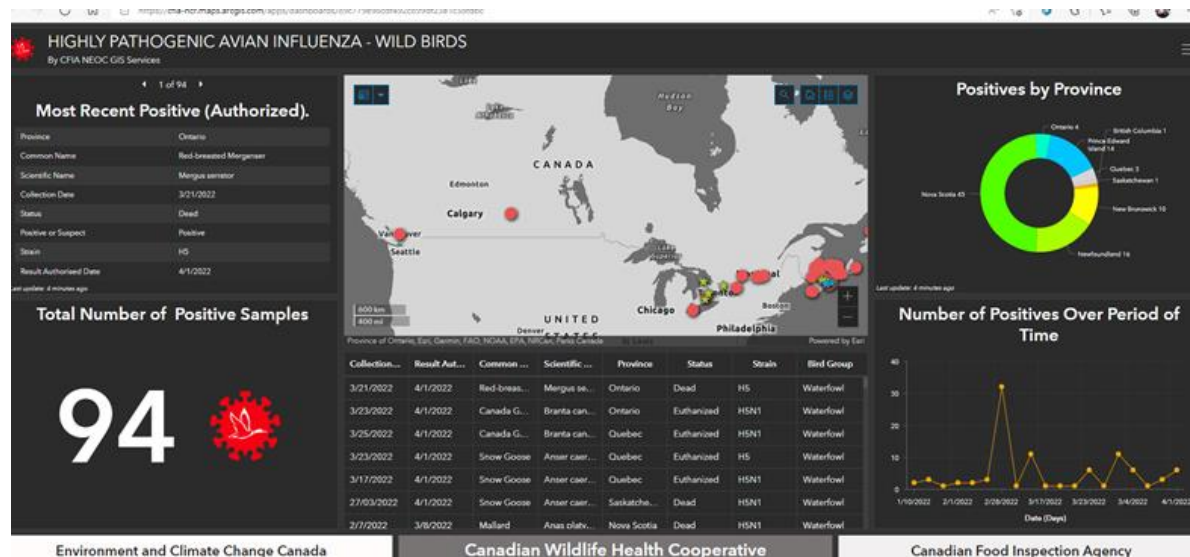
Dear Atlassing Community,

As you are likely already aware, on March 21, 2022, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) reported highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1, in a sample taken from a red-tailed hawk that was found in the Region of Waterloo. To date, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been confirmed in multiple wild bird species including gulls, waterfowl, raptors and corvids. The HPAI situation in Ontario is evolving rapidly and it is likely that Ontario will see more confirmed cases over the coming weeks and months.

As you prepare for a busy atlassing field season, we wanted to reach out and provide you with some general information and additional links to resources regarding highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild birds.

The key message for atlassers at this time is: **If you encounter any dead, injured or sick birds, they should not be touched and if possible, should be immediately reported to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative by phone (866-673-4781) or report online (<https://cwhc.wildlifesubmissions.org/#/>).**

The Canada Food Inspection Agency just released a tremendous tool for the wild bird community to track and see what birds have been reported, where, how many, when and so many more details. The dashboard guide describes in more detail, the functionality of the dashboard see here: [Dashboard Guide \(version française\)](#)



English Dashboard: <https://cfia-ncr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/89c779e98cdf492c899df23e1c38fdbc>

French Dashboard: <https://cfia-ncr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/aadd05f701b34e01b70ae24f33be5912>

Thank you

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza detected in Ontario – General Information

On March 21, 2022, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) reported highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1, in a sample taken from a red-tailed hawk that was found in the Region of Waterloo. The hawk was reported to be showing neurological signs and was euthanized. Since that time, a number of other cases of wild birds exhibiting neurological signs have been detected and are currently awaiting confirmatory analysis. ECCC researchers and biologists have been assisting the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) with sampling live and deceased wild birds.

Avian influenza virus is a contagious viral infection that affects domestic and wild birds throughout the world. Many strains occur naturally in wild birds and circulate in migratory populations. Avian influenza virus is designated Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) when it has characteristics that cause mass disease and mortality in infected susceptible poultry. Wild and domestic birds can become infected when they are in contact with saliva, nasal secretions or feces of infected birds, or through indirect contact with contaminated surfaces and substrates.

HPAI is highly transmissible and poses the greatest threat to domestic poultry, where it can cause high rates of disease and mortality, with potentially serious economic consequences for the poultry industry. Appropriate mitigation measures should be considered if visiting a commercial poultry operation or a property with captive birds.

Wild birds likely play a key role in the epidemiology and spread of HPAI (both over long distances and locally). Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) viruses have infected more than 100 species of wild birds worldwide, but infections are most common among water birds such as ducks, geese, swans, gulls, and shorebirds, which are considered the natural reservoir for avian influenza viruses. Most wild birds infected with HPAI remain asymptomatic, but mortality events involving wild birds have resulted from this H5N1 strain. There is evidence that raptors and some scavenger species are susceptible to mortality from the virus. People who handle wild birds or work in habitats frequented by wild birds should recognize and mitigate the potential risk of spreading HPAI between sites and species, and from wild birds to domestic poultry.

There have been no human cases of avian influenza resulting from exposure to wild birds in North America. Most human cases of avian influenza worldwide have resulted from close contact with infected poultry or their contaminated environments. While the risk of human infection with avian influenza viruses is low, individuals who work with wild birds should adhere to public health guidance regarding appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and additional personal safety measures.

Please refer to the following web links for up-to-date information regarding Avian Influenza:

Human Health and Safety, Handling and Consumption Guidance.

Wild birds and avian influenza – Handling guidelines – Public Health Agency of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/flu-influenza/fact-sheet-guidance-on-precautions-handling-wild-birds.html#a4>

Avian Influenza and Wild Birds

Avian influenza in wild birds and avian influenza – Environment and Climate Change Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/avian-influenza-wild-birds.html>

Avian Influenza and Domestic Poultry and Pet Birds

How to prevent and detect disease in backyard flocks and pet birds – Canadian Food Inspection Agency

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/backyard-flocks-and-pet-birds/eng/1323643634523/1323644740109>

Avian Influenza Information – Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/vet/facts/avian_influenza.htm

For updates regarding the spread of avian influenza and HPAI outbreaks see the following websites:

Wild Birds

Canada - http://www.cwhc-rccsf.ca/avian_influenza_biweekly_reports.php. You can also receive automatic updates via email by sending a request to info@cwhc-rccsf.ca

United States - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-2022/2022-hpai-wild-birds>

Domestic Poultry

Canada - <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/eng/1323990856863/1323991018946>

United States - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-2022/2022-hpai-commercial-backyard-flocks>