

Public Health Advisory

Avian influenza present in Quebec

April 19, 2022 Nunavut-Wide

As of December 20, 2021, avian influenza virus (AIV) was identified among wild birds in Canada. On April 7, 2022, the first three cases of avian influenza in birds were confirmed in Quebec.

Wild birds in Canada and throughout the world are natural carriers of AIV. It is a viral infection that is highly contagious among birds and most strains of the virus cause little or no harm. However, these viruses can spread to domestic poultry and, under certain circumstances, to people. Currently, there have been no human cases of AIV from exposure to wild birds in North America.

Ducks and geese have a history of being affected by AIV and with spring migration underway, the Government of Nunavut is asking Nunavummiut to be aware and watchful for birds with symptoms.

Signs that a bird may have AIV include nervousness, trembling or lack of coordination, swelling around the head, neck and eyes, diarrhea or sudden death. Multiple dead birds in one location are a sign that the virus is present.

The risk of transmission of AIV to humans from cases in wild birds is low. However, basic measures are recommended for hunters and other bird handlers to reduce the risk of illness and the spread of the virus: wear gloves, wash hands with soap and warm water, clean clothing, and equipment.

Eating properly cooked waterfowl meat is not a source of infection for humans.

If you notice any unusual death or illness in birds, contact your local conservation office. If you feel very sick after handling a bird, contact your local health centre.

For more information, please refer to the Government of Canada's website <u>here</u>.

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