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If you find a dead bird— and wonder if it has the bird flu virus

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South Dakotans have been vigilant, sending dead blue jays, magpies, crows, hawks, owls, and eagles into the South Dakota Department of Health, seeking to know if the birds died from West Nile virus (WNV). We can stop looking. WNV is in South Dakota to stay. There is nothing further we can learn from testing birds for WNV. Therefore, if you find an individual dead blue jay, magpie, or crow, dispose of the bird, taking the safety precautions listed on the next page.

But we cannot let down our guard. Birds are considered to be reservoirs for almost all influenza viruses, and occasionally a lethal new virus comes along. We must be on the lookout for a new avian influenza virus known as Asian High Path H5N1 in wild birds, particularly if we come across groups of dead ducks, geese, pheasants, chickens, or turkeys.

To date, nearly all cases of human H5N1 influenza have resulted from contact with sick or dead poultry in other parts of the world. High pathogenic Asian H5N1 has not been found in the U.S. in either birds or humans.

However, we must remain vigilant. If you find a **group** of dead wild birds (or even one) from any of the categories listed in the box to the right, contact the Game, Fish, & Parks Department at 605-773-3485. Do not handle or move the bird(s).

The state is already monitoring commercial poultry flocks. For the latest information on bird flu, go to the SDSU website at <http://sdces.sdstate.edu/avianflu/>

Handling procedures

There are no confirmed cases where H5N1 has been transmitted from wild birds to humans. However, some wild birds (especially ducks, geese, and possibly quail) can be subclinical carriers of H5N1 (be infected but not show signs of the disease). Wild birds can also be infected with parasites and/or other organisms such as salmonella.

Attention, hunters:

At this time scientists do not know if (1) wild birds will spread the virus between regions, (2) the virus will persist

All flu isolates from wild birds in the U.S. have been low pathogenic Avian Influenza (AI) viruses that rarely cause the birds to even become sick. However, some species of North American waterfowl, including those that use our Central Flyway, mingle on nesting grounds in Alaska and Siberia with migrant birds from parts of Asia where bird/poultry/human contacts have resulted in cases of high pathogenic AI in humans.

Special target species are:

**ducks, dabbling and diving
shorebirds (plovers, sandpipers,
yellowlegs, etc.)**

geese

swans

gulls

terns

cranes

egrets/herons

in wild bird populations, or (3) wild birds will become long-distance, long-term risks.

Scientists **do** know that

- (1) wild waterfowl such as ducks can be infected with H5N1 and shed virus without showing any signs of the disease;
- (2) currently circulating strains of H5N1 viruses are becoming more pathogenic for animals and ducks infected with the virus; and
- (3) experimental studies show quail carry receptors for both avian and human strains of influenza and may serve as potential intermediate hosts for H5N1.

For safety's sake:

- Do not handle or eat sick game.
- Wear goggles, a face mask (rated N95 or higher) and rubber or disposable latex gloves while handling and cleaning game.
- Wash hands thoroughly, and thoroughly clean knives, equipment, and surfaces that have come in contact with game with hot soapy water and disinfectant.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.
- All game should be thoroughly cooked (well done or $\geq 165^{\circ}$ F). Additional information can be found at: www.who.int/entity/foodsafety/fs_management/No_02_Avianinfluenza_Dec04_en.pdf

When collecting dead birds, the risk of infection from WNV, H5N1, or any other pathogen may be eliminated by avoiding contamination of mucous membranes, eyes, and skin by material from the birds. This can be accomplished by eliminating any direct contact with dead birds via use of the following safety precautions:

- When picking up any dead bird, wear disposable impermeable gloves and place it directly into a plastic bag. Do not use gloves that are torn or otherwise damaged. If gloves are not available, use an inverted double-plastic bag technique for picking up carcasses or use a shovel to scoop the carcass into a plastic bag.
- In situations in which the bird carcass is in a wet environment or in other situations in which splashing or aerosolization of viral particles is likely to occur during disposal, safety goggles or glasses and a surgical mask may be worn to protect mucous membranes against splashed droplets or particles.
- Bird carcasses should be double bagged and placed in a trash receptacle that is secured from access by children and animals. If the carcass will be submitted for testing, hold it a cool location until pickup or delivery to authorities (do not freeze unless told to do so by authorities. Carcasses should not be held in close contact with food (e.g., not in a household refrigerator or picnic cooler).
- After handling any dead bird, avoid touching the face with gloved or unwashed hands.
- Any PPE [Personal Protective Equipment] that was used (e.g. gloves, safety glasses, mask) should be discarded or disinfected when done, and hands should then be washed with soap and water (or use an alcohol-based hand gel when soap and water are not available). (See http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/doh/aviansurveillance.htm?s_cid=ccu082806_avian2_e#ppedisinfec tion/ and the CDC Clean Hands Campaign website <http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/>)

From Centers for Disease Control: Interim Guidance for States Conducting Avian Mortality Surveillance for West Nile Virus (WNV) and/or Highly Pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza Virus