



Press

Release



wichitafallstx.gov

For Immediate Release

May 4, 2022

H5N1 Avian Flu in Wichita County

Wichita Falls, Texas – The Wichita Falls - Wichita County Public Health District received notification late afternoon on May 3, 2022 from the Texas Department of State Health Services laboratory of a confirmed case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (H5N1) in a fledgling owl in Wichita County. This is the first confirmation of H5N1 in Wichita County.

The owl was discovered in Iowa Park on 4/17/2022 and was taken to a local rescue center on 4/18/2022. The bird was tested on 4/25/2022 and was euthanized the same day. Test results received on 5/3/2022 were positive for H5N1. 10 people were identified as possible contacts to the bird, all have been contacted and are asymptomatic at this time. Most have completed their 10-day monitoring period.

According to the Texas Animal Health Commission, Avian Influenza (AI) is a flu virus that may cause illness in domestic poultry, fowl and birds. Migratory waterfowl are a natural reservoir for this disease.

According to CDC, infected birds shed bird flu viruses in their saliva, mucous and feces. Bird flu infections among people are rare; however, human infections can happen when enough virus gets into a person's eyes, nose, or mouth, or is inhaled. People with close or lengthy unprotected contact (not wearing respiratory protection or eye protection) with infected birds or places that sick birds or their mucous, saliva, or feces have touched, may be at greater risk of bird flu virus infection. Illnesses in people from bird flu virus infections have ranged from mild (e.g., eye infection, upper respiratory symptoms) to severe illness (e.g., pneumonia) that can result in death. At this time, there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission of H5N1 virus in the US.

Currently, the transmission risk of avian influenza from infected birds to people remain low, but the public should take basic protective measures (i.e., wearing gloves, face masks and handwashing) if contact with wild birds cannot be avoided.

If you have handled a bird and become symptomatic, contact your primary care provider. A Health Advisory was sent to local Health Care Providers on 5/3/2022 including the recommendations for investigations and response to the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (H5N1) Virus.

As a poultry owner, you know how important it is to keep your birds healthy. If you have sick or dying birds, please consult your veterinarian, or to the local wildlife biologist at 325-203-2037 or report to the Texas Animal Health Commission (or the USDA) right away. Toll-Free Number: 1-800-550-8242

For more information about HPAI in Wichita County, visit www.wichitafallstx.gov

For more information about HPAI in Texas, visit www.tahc.texas.gov

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