

## Avian Influenza: Preventing Transmission Animal Health Control Area Order

### WHAT IS AVIAN INFLUENZA?

Avian influenza is a viral infection that can be highly contagious among birds and is found in domestic poultry and wild birds including raptors, gulls, terns, shorebirds, ducks, geese, cranes and swans. Wild birds and waterfowl in Canada and throughout the world are natural carriers of avian influenza viruses.

### SIGNS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA (H5N1):

- decrease in egg production
- tremors or lack of coordination
- swelling around the head, neck and eyes
- lack of energy or movement
- coughing, gasping for air or sneezing
- diarrhea or
- sudden death
- bleeding into the skin of legs, face, body or mouth

### PROTECTING BIRD HEALTH

#### Wild Bird Exclusion

Keeping birds under cover and away from wild birds is an important biosecurity measure to prevent exposure. If you suspect your birds have been in contact with wild birds, watch for signs of illness and contact a veterinarian immediately if your birds are sick or behaving abnormally..

#### Clothing and Footwear

Wearing separate clothing and footwear inside and outside pens also helps to protect bird health.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the lead for responding to high path avian influenza in Ontario. To-date, the CFIA has declared 13 primary control zones in the province to prevent the spread of the disease.

As a result of this declaration, birds, their products and by-products, as well as things exposed to birds cannot be moved into, out of, within, or through primary control zones except by permission.

#### Permit and Movement Control Permissions

Learn more about the CFIA's permit and movement control permissions at [Permits and movement control permissions - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](https://www.inspection.gc.ca/permits-and-movement-control-permissions/canada-ca)

### NEW: MINISTER'S ORDER AND REGULATIONS UNDER THE *ANIMAL HEALTH ACT, 2009*

To reduce the risk of spread outside of those areas, an Animal Health Control Area Order and requirements of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario is being implemented to temporarily prohibit the running, hosting or holding of commingling events such as shows, sales, swaps, fairs, sport and educational displays where birds commingle and prohibit the movement of birds to those events.

Temporarily halting participation in these kinds of events will reduce contact between birds and reduce the risk of disease transmission.

To learn more about the Minister's Order and Chief Veterinarian for Ontario requirements, visit: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/min-order/index.html>.

It is important to note that this order does not extend to any activity where a person is lawfully exercising existing aboriginal or treaty rights.

This Minister's Order takes effect on April 9, 2022 and ends on May 9, 2022, but may be extended if required.

## WHAT ARE COMMINGLING EVENTS?

Commingling means any of the following:

- bird shows
- Bird Buy Sell Trade (BST) events, sales or swaps which are locations where birds from multiple locations are brought together and may be exchanged or purchased
- the portion of any agricultural or other fair where birds are exhibited.
- a site where birds from multiple locations are brought together for the purpose of sport.
- a site where birds are brought from multiple locations for the purpose of education (but does not include the place where the birds are commonly housed).
- vaccination gatherings (bringing birds from multiple sources to a single premises for vaccination).
- transport of birds via broker-transporters to attend the events described in the above.

## PERMITTED ACTIVITIES INCLUDE NORMAL BUSINESS CARRIED OUT AT:

- a slaughter plant operating in accordance with the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* or the operator of an establishment identified in a licence that is issued under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act (Canada)* that authorizes the slaughter of food animals under that Act.
- a registered research facility or a licenced supply facility under the *Animals for Research Act*.

- a wildlife rehabilitation centre or other similar facility where the protected wildlife or game wildlife are kept in captivity pursuant to a wildlife custodian authorization issued under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997*.
- an entity prescribed under subsection 6(1) of Ontario Regulation 447/19 (Ministerial Prescriptions) under the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019* and any other entity that provides animal sheltering services.
- any site or location where activities may be undertaken by a poundkeeper under the *Pounds Act*.
- pet stores or other permanent retail locations where birds may be bought, sold or traded.
- retail outlets and similar places that sell or distribute live chicks (i.e., the young or juvenile life stage of the domestic hen).
- an accredited veterinary facility under the *Veterinarians Act*.
- zoos and similar animal experience businesses at the location where the birds are permanently housed.
- any activity where a person is lawfully exercising existing aboriginal or treaty rights.

## PRECAUTIONS FOR HUNTING AND HANDLING

- It is considered safe to hunt, handle, and eat healthy game birds and harvested eggs. However, because avian influenza can infect wild birds without clinical signs, additional precautions should be taken when engaging in hunting or egg harvesting activities:
- Avoid hunting game birds and waterfowl or harvesting eggs in areas where an outbreak of avian influenza has been reported or where sick or dead birds are found. Before you hunt, check that restrictions in your area have not changed.
- Do not handle, eat or harvest eggs from sick birds or birds that have died from unknown causes.

- As much as possible avoid entering water bodies or muddy areas.
- Always cook game meat and eggs thoroughly and follow general safe food handling practices: cook eggs to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F), avoid consuming eggs raw or partially cooked (runny yolk), and avoid using raw eggs in foods that will not be cooked, baked or heat-treated in other ways. Cook meat pieces and cuts to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F) and cook whole birds to an internal temperature of 82°C (180°F).
- Practice good hygiene when processing meat or eggs, including wearing latex, nitrile or rubber gloves, sanitizing work surfaces, minimizing contact with blood, feces and feathers, and work in a clean, well-ventilated environment.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling birds.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water immediately after you have finished. If you do not have access to water, use hand sanitizer or wipe with at least 60% alcohol.
- Keep young children and pets away from areas that could be contaminated.
- Immediately remove and wash and/or change clothing and footwear that may be contaminated with blood, feces or respiratory secretions.
- Not only does this protect your health, but also helps to prevent the spread of the virus to other birds and domestic poultry, as well as other people, animals or pets.
- Thoroughly clean hunting and egg harvesting equipment, clothing and footwear to minimize the potential for contamination, especially between nesting sites. Use a mixture of household bleach (25 ml, a little less than 2 tbsp) mixed into two litres of water. Clothing should be washed in hot water and dried on a highest heat setting.
- If you own or keep birds, even if you are not hunting or collecting eggs, be aware you can bring avian influenza home on your clothing, footwear and person.
- Consider caring for your birds first thing in the day, before you do other tasks.
- Consider having a dedicated family member who does bird care and not other farm or outdoor tasks, or consider having dedicated bird care footwear and clothing.
- Cover your hair when working with your birds, and if you have been regularly working outdoors consider wearing a mask and good quality latex, nitrile or vinyl gloves.

## LEARN MORE

For more detailed guidance, hunters can consult the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's website: [Handling guidelines for wild birds and avian influenza.](#)

For information on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Permits and Movement Control Permissions, visit [Permits and movement control permissions - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](#) or call 519-953-6658.

For information from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs visit the [Avian Influenza webpage](#) or call the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300.

To report a sick or dead wild bird, please call the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at 1-866-673-4781.

To report a sick domestic bird, please call the CFIA at 1-226-217-8022.