



Washington County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Avian Flu Alert

Hagerstown, MD. (September 27, 2025) - The Washington County Department of Health has received a report of dead wild birds (vultures) in the county (residential area in Boonsboro). The birds have been collected and tested for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Preliminary results were received the evening of 9/26/2025 and are presumptively positive for avian influenza. Once we receive confirmed results, we will post the findings. The risk to the public is LOW; however, you should not handle dead or sick birds. If you believe you have been in direct contact without PPE (ie. gloves) with dead birds in this area, please reach out to WCHD Division of Nursing at 240-313-3210.

Avian influenza is a highly contagious airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among birds through nasal and eye secretions and droppings. The virus can be spread from flock to flock, including flocks of wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, equipment, and the clothing and shoes of caretakers. This virus affects poultry, like chickens, ducks, and turkeys, and some wild bird species, such as ducks, geese, shorebirds, and raptors (i.e. vultures).

Individuals who encounter a dead wild bird should call USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which is **coordinating collection and disposal efforts** with the Department of Natural Resources, at **1-877-463-6497**. Those with phone numbers outside of Maryland should call **410-349-8055**.

IF YOU HAVE SICK POULTRY OR EXPERIENCE INCREASED MORTALITY

- Commercial poultry producers should follow the protocol of notifying the company they grow for when they notice signs of disease.
- Maryland backyard flock owners who notice any of the signs of HPAI in their flock should email the Maryland Department of Agriculture Animal Health team at **md.birdflu@maryland.gov** or **animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov** or by calling

410-841-5810. Please be prepared to provide your contact information, size of flock, location, and concerns. Do not take dead or sick birds to a lab to be tested to move them off-site.

As a reminder, backyard flock owners are required to register their flocks with the Maryland Department of Agriculture to assist in protecting Maryland's poultry industries from diseases such as HPAI. Register your flock by completing the [Maryland Poultry Premises Registration Form](#) and email the form to animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov

Additionally, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources urges waterfowl hunters to take safety precautions to prevent the spread of the virus by washing hands and clothes after handling game and using dedicated clothing, boots, and tools for cleaning game that are not used around domestic poultry or pet birds.

For more information on avian influenza, please visit:

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Pages/Avian-Influenza.aspx>