

## Avian flu continued

- Reporting wild birds: The public should report observations of sick or deceased birds if 5 or more birds are found at a single location using this simple form at [mass.gov/reportbirds](https://mass.gov/reportbirds).
- Reporting domestic birds: The public should report sick or dead poultry or other domestic birds by calling MDAR's Division of Animal Health at (617) 626-1795.
- Handling birds and other wildlife: The public should strictly avoid handling any sick or dead birds or other animals. Report sightings as indicated above or call the local Animal Control Officer.
- Keeping pets safe: Pets should always be kept away from wildlife. Cats are highly susceptible to HPAI and may die from an infection. Cat owners in affected areas should keep their pets indoors to prevent them from being exposed to infected wildlife.
- Hunting geese: While eating wild game meat is generally considered safe, licensed hunters can minimize risk from wildlife diseases by following [best practices when handling and processing game](#).

The recent outbreak at Billington Sea in Plymouth has impacted over 60 Canada geese, swans, and ducks. Smaller outbreaks of suspected HPAI impacting fewer than 15 geese at each location have been reported in recent weeks in other parts of the state. Officials responded quickly and are collecting, testing, and safely disposing of dead birds. Prompt reporting of sick and dead birds by the public will expedite testing and diagnosis in cooperation with state and federal partners who have been monitoring HPAI for several years.

Both wild and domesticated birds can become infected with HPAI. Raptors, waterfowl and other aquatic birds are most at risk for infection, although any bird species should be considered susceptible. Birds may be infected with HPAI without showing any signs of illness. Wild mammals, especially those that scavenge on birds such as foxes, can also become infected.

Humans are rarely infected with avian influenza viruses. Humans that have prolonged close contact with sick or dead birds infected with HPAI are the most at risk of becoming infected. People with questions about the public health impact of HPAI can visit DPH's Avian influenza [webpage](#) or call the Division of Epidemiology (available 24/7) at 617-983-6800.