



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

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DOH INVESTIGATING HUMAN CONTACTS TO INFECTED H5N1 FLOCKS
No Humans in Hawai'i Tested Positive for Avian Influenza

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU — The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) is investigating human contacts to the flock infected with H5N1. No humans in Hawai'i have tested positive for avian influenza at this time.

To date, 54 individuals have been investigated for potential exposure. Of those, 34 were offered testing because of unprotected exposure (meaning without use of adequate personal protective equipment), to the infected birds within the past 10 days, or because they had developed respiratory symptoms within 10 days of contact with the birds.

Twenty-nine consented to testing, including 13 who had at least one symptom of respiratory infection and 16 who had no symptoms. All the individuals who would be considered to have very high-risk exposure to the infected birds, including prolonged direct contact with visibly sick, dying, or dead birds, consented to testing.

Testing involved collection of swabs from the nasopharynx, nose, throat, and/or conjunctiva that were tested by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) at the State Laboratories Division. Results for all 29 of those tested, including those with very high-risk exposure and/or symptoms, have come back negative for avian influenza. Two symptomatic individuals tested positive for common cold viruses. Investigation into potential exposures to individuals who interacted with ducks or geese at the Mililani Pet Fair on Nov. 2 is ongoing. At least four individuals whose only exposure was at the Mililani Pet Fair have been tested for avian influenza with all negative results. Additional investigation results will be shared as they become available.

DOH has worked with the U.S. Department of Defense to identify individuals with potential exposure. They have been tested and there are no confirmed cases.

The strain of avian influenza identified in the infected flock has been confirmed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory as clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype A3. The A3 genotype was first identified in wild birds in Alaska in 2022. Identification of this genotype supports a theory of introduction of H5N1 to Hawai'i by migratory wild birds. This is a different genotype of the virus than the one that has infected dairy cows on the U.S. mainland and is also different from the genotype reported in a critically ill adolescent in British Columbia. It is unknown whether genotype A3 is likely to infect humans or other mammals.

While initial human testing results are reassuring, DOH urges the public to continue to exercise caution. Avoid close contact with wild birds, and if you encounter birds that appear sick or have died, don't approach them. Report sick or dead birds, especially if multiple or unusual, to the Department of Agriculture (808-483-7106 during Monday to Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or 808-837-8092 during non-business hours and holidays).

Hawai'i residents who recently visited or worked on a farm in another state with known or suspected H5N1 animal infections should contact the Hawai'i Department of Health Disease Reporting Line 808-586-4586 for a telephone risk assessment.

Visit DOH's [avian influenza](#) website for more information.

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