



STATE OF HAWAI'I
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.

GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., MGA, MPH

DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

H5 AVIAN FLU DETECTED AT WASTEWATER SAMPLING SITE IN HILO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2024

24-155

HONOLULU — The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) State Laboratories Division has detected H5 avian influenza (bird flu) in a wastewater sample collected on Dec. 2 at the Hilo Wastewater Treatment Plant on Hawai'i Island.

This is the first detection of bird flu on a neighbor island and indicates an H5 type of bird flu virus was present. Wastewater testing cannot determine if the detection is specifically the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 subtype of bird flu virus which was recently found on O'ahu.

The presence of the H5N1 virus in Hawai'i was first confirmed in November 2024 in a backyard flock of birds in Central O'ahu. That virus strain was a different genotype of the virus that has infected birds and dairy cows on the U.S. mainland.

While the risk to the public remains low, HPAI can cause severe illness with a high mortality rate among certain bird populations such as poultry. Commercial poultry producers and residents with backyard flocks are strongly advised to [increase biosecurity measures](#) to reduce the likelihood of infection. HPAI can also infect dairy cows. While pasteurized milk is safe, raw milk should be avoided.

To report multiple or unusual illnesses in poultry, livestock, or other wild birds or animals, contact HDOA Animal Industry Division at **808-483-7102**, Monday to Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or **808-837-8092** during non-business hours and holidays.

Residents who believe they may have been exposed to sick birds or other wildlife should contact the Disease Outbreak Control Division Disease Reporting Line at **808-586-4586** for additional guidance.

Resources on avian influenza:

- HDOA, Animal Disease Control: <https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/ai/lcd/avian-influenza-information/>
- HDOA, Avian Influenza – Biosecurity in The Context of Animal Agriculture: <https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/ai/lcd/adconcerns/aiinfo/biosec/>
- DOH avian influenza information: https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/avian-influenza/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza>

#

Media Contact:

Claudette Springer
Information Specialist
Hawai'i State Department of Health
Phone: 808-586-4445
Email: claudette.springer@doh.hawaii.gov