



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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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DOH CLOSELY MONITORING DETECTION OF H5 AVIAN FLU IN KAUA'I WASTEWATER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU — The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) State Laboratories Division has detected H5 avian influenza (bird flu) at very low levels in wastewater samples collected at the Līhu'e Wastewater Treatment Plant on Kaua'i.

The first detection was from a sample collected on Dec. 11, 2024, that was so low that it was not considered a positive result. Samples collected on Dec. 18, 2024 and Jan. 8, 2025 had similar detections. While none is considered a positive result, the consistent very low-level detections indicate a high likelihood that H5 bird flu virus is on Kaua'i. No H5 virus infections of birds, dairy cows, or humans have been detected on Kaua'i to date. Detection of infected birds in the state has so far been limited to O'ahu.

The H5 bird flu viruses include the H5N1 subtype of bird flu virus that has spread globally in birds since its initial discovery in 1996 and recently has been detected in several mammal

species including dairy cows. Wastewater testing cannot determine if the detection is specifically this H5N1 subtype of bird flu virus.

The presence of the H5N1 bird flu 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. H5 was subsequently detected at the Hilo Wastewater Treatment Plant on Hawai'i Island.

While the risk to the public remains low, bird flu 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. Bird flu can also infect dairy cows. While pasteurized milk is safe, raw milk should be avoided.

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) recommends the following for residents that need to remove a dead wild bird from their property:

- Wear disposable gloves or turn a plastic bag inside out and use it to pick up the carcass.
- Double-bag the carcass and throw it out with the regular trash.
- Wash your hands and disinfect your clothing and shoes after handling a dead wild bird.
- Be mindful of any health symptoms that may develop afterward.

To report multiple or unusual illnesses in poultry, livestock, or other wild birds or animals from any island in the state, contact HDOA Animal Industry Division at **808-483-7100** or, email: hdoa.ldc@hawaii.gov, 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/ldc/avian-influenza-information/>
- HDOA, Avian Influenza – Biosecurity in The Context of Animal Agriculture: <https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/ai/ldc/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>

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