



Newsletter
Southeastern Game Bird Breeders & Hunting
Preserve Association
No. 5, May 2022

Our April Short Course



Dr. Gary Davis accepting a plaque for 32 years of dedicated service to our Organization.

Our 2022 Short Course and Conference was a great success! It was held at the Georgia Poultry Lab near Gainesville, Georgia. We had a very good turn out of members with several excellent speakers covering a wide variety of subjects.

Next year's Conference is tentatively scheduled for April 21st, 2023 at the Shady Knoll Game Bird Farm near Asheville, North Carolina. You Don't want to miss this!

Avian Influenza Detected in Bald Eagles in Georgia

The risk of HPAI being transmitted to people is low

SOCIAL CIRCLE, Ga. — The viral disease called highly pathogenic avian influenza has been detected in bald eagles in Georgia and has likely undercut nesting success for eagles in the state's coastal counties, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

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Avian influenza or bird flu can infect wild and domestic birds, as well as other animals. The strain known as highly pathogenic avian influenza, commonly referred to as HPAI, is worldwide, highly infectious, untreatable and potentially lethal to infected animals. HPAI has been detected in wild birds in more than 30 states this year, the U.S.

Agriculture Department reports. Those cases list 11 wild birds in Georgia, including lesser scaup, gadwall, American wigeon and now bald eagle.

The risk of HPAI being transmitted to people is low. To date, no human infections from the current virus (H5N1) have been documented in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Samples from three bald eagles found dead, one each, in Chatham, Glynn and Liberty counties tested as suspected positive last month at the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study in Athens. Those results were recently confirmed as HPAI (H5N1 2.3.4.4b Eurasian strain) by the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. Other eagle carcasses are also being checked.

In Georgia's six coastal counties, annual DNR aerial surveys of nesting bald eagles have revealed more failed nests – those that did not fledge young – than expected. Some nests had dead eaglets. Others were missing young that usually would not have left the nest yet, according to survey leader Dr. Bob Sargent, a program manager with DNR's Wildlife Conservation Section.

Citing preliminary findings, Sargent estimated that nest success along the coast this year is down about 30 percent. Although the 73 nests documented was normal, he said fewer than half fledged young, compared to an annual average success rate of 78 percent from 2015-2021.

About a third of the eagle nests in Georgia are in the coastal counties. HPAI is typically carried by waterfowl and shorebirds. Eagles could have contracted the virus by preying or scavenging on dead or sick waterbirds (ducks often gather in large rafts in coastal waters during winter). Dead bald eagles have been confirmed with HPAI in other Southeastern states, including Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina.

Sargent said the bald eagle population in Georgia is strong and he does not expect HPAI to significantly slow the species' rebound. Initial survey results of eagle nesting outside the coastal region indicate a success rate on par with previous years. Full survey results are expected by late spring.

DNR is working with the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study and other agencies to investigate mortalities involving wild birds on the coast. Wildlife rehabilitators have been advised.

To help prevent the spread of HPAI, the public should avoid handling sick or dead birds (**CDC recommendations for hunters and game birds**), report dead or sick eagles to DNR at (478) 994-1438 and keep pets away from sick or dead birds. Symptoms of HPAI can vary from lethargy to tremors and seizures. However, live birds can be asymptomatic and dead ones may show no obvious signs of trauma. The Georgia Department of Agriculture (**<https://agr.georgia.gov>**) provides guidance regarding commercial poultry operations and backyard flocks. Issues involving poultry should be promptly reported to the Georgia Avian Influenza Hotline, (770) 766-6850 or **gapoultrylab.org/avian-influenza-hotline**. For concerns about a potential human infection or exposure, please contact your public health department.

FOR MORE

- Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division (HPAI fact sheet): **<https://georgiawildlife.com/sick-injured-or-orphaned-wildlife>**
- U.S. Geological Survey: **<https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/ecosystems/avian-influenza>**
- National Wildlife Health Center: **<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc>**
- Georgia Department of Agriculture: **<https://agr.georgia.gov/avian-influenza.aspx>**
- USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, **<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza>**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: **<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>**
- Georgia Department of Public Health: (**<https://dph.georgia.gov>**) or **<https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/dph-avian-influenza-informational/download>**

Avian Influenza Cases Outpacing 2014/2015 Outbreak
Intel examines the impact of HPAI region by region

WASHINGTON — The number of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) cases in the United States are outpacing the 2014/2015 outbreak, but the higher numbers might be attributed to improvements in detection and reporting protocols. The American Farm Bureau Federation’s latest Market Intel examines the impact of HPAI region by region. Farm Bureau economists found as of April 7, there have been more than 600 detections of HPAI in wild birds across 31 states, and 158 detections in commercial and backyard flocks across 25 states.

The 2014/2015 outbreak prompted revisions to the National HPAI Surveillance Plan, which has led to heightened annual surveillance plans, providing poultry producers earlier notice to increase their biosecurity measures.

“The HPAI outbreak is an urgent reminder to all poultry farmers to ensure their biosecurity measures are in place,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “Every effort must be made to protect the health of the animals in our care in order to keep America’s food supply strong.” AFBF economists analyzed HPAI detections in commercial flocks and found the Mississippi flyway is the most impacted, with 49% of detections, followed by the Central flyway at 36% and the Atlantic with 15% of cases. The Pacific flyway has not had a reported case.

While HPAI has affected the laying hen population, inventory of eggs is actually 38% higher in 2022 than during the same time in 2015. Eggs should be found easily in the grocery store for Easter and Passover celebrations, but prices will be higher.

Read the full Market Intel [here](#).

—American Farm Bureau Federation

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- **Profiting from Pastured Animals**
 - June 10-11, 2022
 - Harlingen, Texas
 - This Council for Healthy Food Systems workshop will give farmers the marketing and business skills they need to tap into the expanding market for locally raised, pastured meats, poultry, and eggs.

What you need to know about High Path Avian Influenza

The virus is also not considered a food safety threat, infected birds do not enter the food supply

RALEIGH, N.C. — State Veterinarian Mike Martin announced April 5 that all North Carolina poultry shows, and public sales are suspended due

to the threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

This includes all exhibitions, farm tours, shows, sales, flea markets, auction markets, swaps and meets pertaining to poultry and feathered fowl in North Carolina. Poultry owners are urged to keep birds indoors and report sick birds. These activities are suspended until further notice. This type of HPAI virus is considered a low risk to people according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. There are no cases to date of this strain of HPAI infecting a person. The virus is also not considered a food safety threat and infected birds do not enter the food supply. All properly cooked poultry products are safe to consume.

“This suspension is due to the continued spread of HPAI that has affected commercial and backyard flocks in numerous states, including North Carolina,” said Martin. “We do not make this decision lightly. HPAI is a serious threat to our poultry industry and this is a precaution to help limit the introduction of the virus to backyard and commercial flocks.”

The warning signs of HPAI include:

- Reduced energy, decreased appetite and/or decreased activity
- Lower egg production and/or soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb and wattles
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, comb and legs
- Difficulty breathing, runny nares (nose), and/or sneezing
- Twisting of the head and neck, stumbling, falling down, tremors and/or circling
- Greenish diarrhea
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As of April 11, HPAI has been detected at eight commercial poultry facilities in Johnston and Wayne counties. More than 108,000 turkeys and more than 280,000 broilers have been depopulated and composted on-site to prevent further spread of the virus. Additional updates to the current HPAI outbreak will be posted

to www.ncagr.gov/avianflu/newsroom.htm.

North Carolina joins several other states, including Georgia, that have also canceled or altered poultry events due to HPAI. Poultry owners across the state need to practice strict biosecurity. This includes keeping flocks indoors without access to outside and reporting sick birds to your local veterinarian, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Veterinary Division, **919-707-3250** or the N.C. Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory System **919-733-3986**.

More information about High Path Avian Influenza is online at www.ncagr.gov/avianflu

–NCDA&CS



Honoring Memorial Day

Honor those who fought for our country by visiting one of Georgia's historic sites this holiday. [Fort King George](#) in Darien will offer Revolutionary War soldier life demonstrations on Monday, May 30. [Pickett's Mill Battlefield](#) in Dallas will host a wreath-laying ceremony and service on Saturday, May 28, remembering everyone who perished during the Civil War. [Georgia Veterans State Park](#) in Cordele offers a military museum and outdoor exhibits, including a B-29A Superfortress, tanks and helicopter. Find more Memorial Day Weekend programs on [GaStateParks.org](#)

—NCDA&CS

USDA Takes Action to Ensure Rapid Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

To date, the virus has been confirmed in 29 states, affecting more than 33 million domestic birds

PUBLISHED ON **May 1, 2022**

WASHINGTON — USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is leading a growing response to a large outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). To date, the virus has been confirmed in 29 states, affecting more than 33 million domestic birds. APHIS is working closely with State animal health officials on joint incident responses in each of the affected states.

To help ensure APHIS can continue to provide critical rapid response activities, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack approved the transfer of nearly \$263 million from the Commodity Credit Corporation to APHIS to directly support the response efforts. The funding allows APHIS to continue its critical work with state and local partners to quickly identify and address cases of HPAI in the United States.

“Highly pathogenic avian influenza is a serious concern for our nation’s poultry industry, and we need to continue our nationwide response to minimize the impact,” said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt. “The Agency’s actions during this ongoing emergency serve to safeguard U.S. **poultry** and egg producers and reduce the effects of avian influenza on agriculture and trade, while also enhancing readiness for other animal health emergencies.”

The Secretary is authorized to transfer funding from available resources (e.g., the Commodity Credit Corporation) to address emergency outbreaks of animal and plant pests and diseases.

Secretary Vilsack previously approved the use of approximately \$130 million in emergency funding in mid-March, and APHIS has used these funds to address nationwide HPAI detections to date. These funds have been used to address indemnity, diagnostics, field activities, and other emergency response costs.

HPAI is a serious disease and requires rapid response because it is highly contagious and often fatal to **poultry**. APHIS and officials from affected states are responding in accordance with Federal and State HPAI response plans, which include implementing quarantine restrictions, depopulating affected flocks, disposing of depopulated birds, cleaning and eliminating the virus from affected premises, and conducting surveillance in surrounding areas.

While these response efforts are vital to ending the outbreak, there are also actions bird owners can take to help stop the spread of this virus. Biosecurity is critical for all bird owners. We encourage bird owners to work to ensure domestic birds do not come into contact with wild birds, and keep poultry confined inside during this high-risk period of migratory bird activity. We also encourage bird owners to limit traffic on and off your farm and use personal protective equipment and disinfection when caring for birds to avoid introducing HPAI. APHIS has a variety of biosecurity resources available

at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/dtf-resources/dtf-resources>. More information about the 2022 HPAI outbreak may be found

at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai>. Resources for bird owners and more information about the HPAI response process may be found

at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-home/hpai>.

[North Carolina Sheep Producer Exploring Performance of Native Grasses](#)

A North Carolina livestock producer received a grant from Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) to explore the use of [native warm-season grasses as forage for Katahdin Hair sheep](#) as a way to quickly bring the animals to market weight, and for better parasite control. Research results will be available through SSARE

Secretary's Corner

It's that time of year when the pesky flies, gnats and other bugs start showing up in our barns creating havoc with our birds, livestock and humans.

FLY CONTROL - NATURALLY

Fly control, an important issue that you need to stay on top of. It's easy to let manure stack up under the cages and the Coturnix Quail are great at producing a lot of it! Seems like their droppings are more moist than what a Bob White produces. Thus a great place for the barn fly to lay it's eggs. We have been lucky in having the Soldier Fly move in on us. They showed up here on the Farm 25 years ago when we were raising Rabbits. We had roughly 2000 rabbits at the time, always kept the isles clean and shoveled out the barn on a regular basis. We came home one day to find the rabbit droppings rolled out across the isle way, looked sort of like a tidal wave had been created out of rabbit droppings. We Took a shovel and moved the tidal wave back out of the isle. Next day when we went into the barn, there were several "tidal waves" across the isles. Again, took the shovel and cleaned the isles. This went on for several days until we said "enough" and started digging into the tidal wave to see what was causing this problem. Found some larvae but they were more "heavy duty" than a fly larvae. So covered them with dry lime, but that didn't seem to phase them. The only thing that did seem to affect them was direct sun light. But that was a job having to shovel them into a bucket and carry out into the sun and scatter just to kill them.. I started Googling and came across the name "Black Soldier Fly" (BSF). The article said they were beneficial in controlling the common house fly aka barn fly. Sure enough, started noticing that when we left the little buggers alone, we had little to no common flies or gnats or anything that normally shows up in a barn. We have been in barns where the flies and gnats would carry you off. What we did have was a large purplish black wasp looking flying bug (the adult Black Soldier Fly). They are rather slow flying and do not try to swarm you though occasionally you will need to swat one out of your way. Nor do they sting you. They don't seem to have any real purpose but to repopulate. And in no time with a damp area and manure they turn into 1000's of new larva. Our barn stays fly free for the most part all summer.

Long story short, we left them alone just shoveling them out of the isle ways so we didn't have to walk thru the manure in the isles. And, as a plus they composted the rabbit manure down to a pulverized crumble.

Over the years we had gotten out of the rabbit business and we had no idea as to where the BSF's had disappeared to. And since no manure to speak of accumulated on our farm, there were no Black Soldier flies. When we started raising quail, several years later, creating a wash out system underneath the cages, I noticed the Soldier Flies had returned and moved in and after 2 months they had our fly problem under control. Prior to that the flies were getting a little overpowering and no amount of pesticide or extra cleaning of the barn seemed to make any difference. Now, the BSF make their home in our Hen barn in the moist areas under the cages all summer beginning around April and stay there until the weather turns off cold when they disappear. Where they go, I have no idea. But I know when the flies start showing up in the Spring, with in a couple three weeks the Black Soldier Flies show up, and the Barn Flies disappear for the most part.

At first I thought the BSF was a little "gross" to look at, thinking fly larvae, but now I "enjoy" seeing them, knowing we will be relatively "fly free" all summer. Apparently the

BSF produce a pheromone that the flies hate! Thus the flies leave the area.

There are two manufacturing plants that have been built to raise BSF's. One is in the Carolina's and the other one is in Canada. The BSF's are being used for animal food as they are high in protein.

Cheryl Webster,
Secretary

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