



Henderson County Department of Public Health

G. David Jenkins, MPA, Health Director
Diana Curran, MD, Medical Director

1200 Spartanburg Highway, Suite 100
Hendersonville, NC 28792

Phone: (828) 692-4223

Fax: (828) 694-1600

www.hendersoncountync.gov/health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For media inquiries, contact:

Andrew Mundhenk, (828) 694-6064

amundhenk@hendersoncountync.gov

Deceased waterfowl at Osceola Lake tests positive for bird flu

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. (February 18, 2025) – A deceased waterfowl at Osceola Lake has tested positive for Avian Influenza H5N1, or bird flu.

The Henderson County Department of Public Health was notified on Feb. 8 of several deceased birds at Osceola Lake. One of the deceased birds was submitted for testing for Avian Influenza H5N1. At this time, a total of five birds have been found deceased.

The Health Department has provided guidance to the owner of the privately-owned lake as well as homeowners, guests and others allowed to use the lake for recreational use. The owner has also posted signage at the lake stating contact with birds should be avoided.

What is Bird flu?

Bird flu is a disease that can affect most species of birds and some mammals, according to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. These viruses naturally spread among wild aquatic birds worldwide. They can also infect domestic poultry and other birds and animals.

The risk of bird flu spreading to humans is still low. Most cases happen when someone has direct contact with infected birds or their feces. Common symptoms of bird flu include fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, and red, irritated eyes, which is a signature sign of bird flu.

Prevention Tips

Birds, their feces and saliva should be avoided by the public. People should avoid contact with sick or dead animals, especially wild birds and poultry. Do not touch surfaces or materials contaminated with saliva, mucous, or animal feces from wild or domestic birds or other animals with confirmed or suspected virus infection.

If a dead bird needs to be disposed of, wear gloves or use a plastic bag turned inside out. Once bagged they can be placed in the regular trash.

People who work with or have direct contact with wild birds or dead or sick animals should wear personal protective equipment (PPE). Wild birds can be infected with the virus even if they don't look sick.

What to do if you made contact with a dead or sick bird

If someone comes into contact with a dead or sick bird without gloves, they should monitor themselves for 10 days for flu symptoms. If symptoms develop, contact your healthcare provider or the Health Department at 828-692-4223 for testing. Inform the provider you were in contact with a sick or dead bird.

The Health Department is working with state partners, including the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and NCDHHS, to continue monitoring and testing in the event of human exposure.

If you suspect you have encountered a dead or deceased animal that may have bird flu, avoid contact with the animal and contact the N.C. Wildlife Interaction Helpline at 866-318-2401 for more guidance.

For more information on bird flu, visit flu.ncdhhs.gov/HPAI/. Flock owners can visit the N.C. Cooperative Extension website for additional guidance at <https://yancey.ces.ncsu.edu/2025/02/birdflu/>.