



Poultry Health Tips Winter 2020-2021



Protect your flock from infectious diseases

The number one strategy for maintaining healthy birds is to decrease their exposure to infectious diseases. Here's how infectious diseases can arrive at your coop and threaten the health of your flock:

Introduction of new birds that are sick

Introduction of new birds that appear healthy, but carry disease

Direct exposure to wildlife

Indirect exposure to wildlife (their droppings, or secretions)

Accidental transport of disease between flocks on our boots, clothes, equipment or vehicles

What should I be thinking of now?

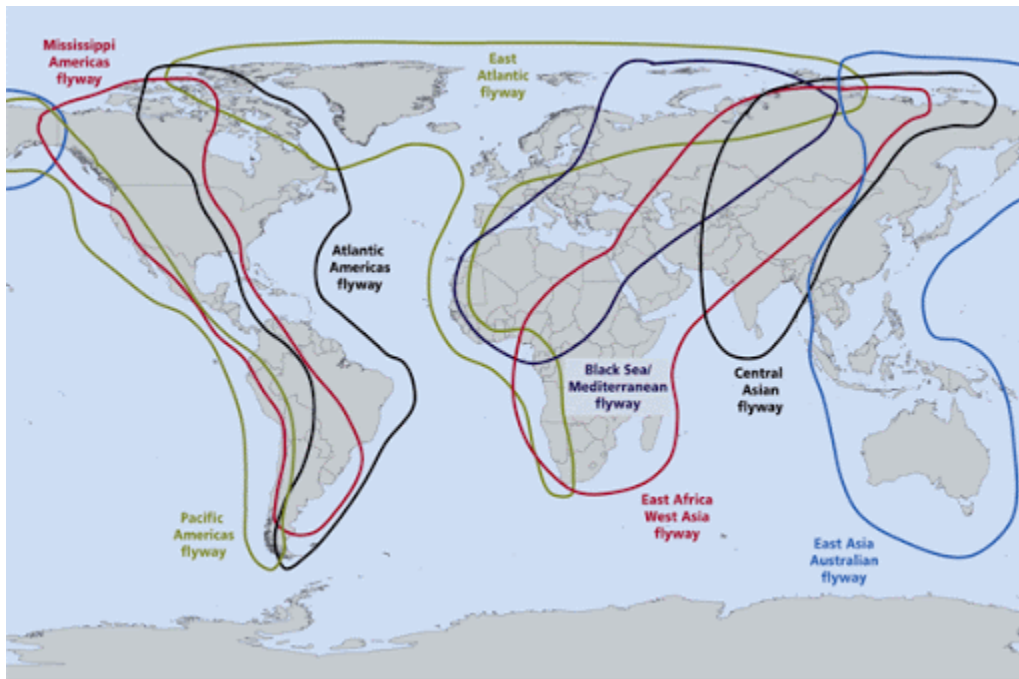
As with humans, late fall and winter is influenza ("flu") season. Influenza in chickens and turkeys can be a deadly disease. However, waterfowl, both wild and domestic, can harbor some types of the influenza virus without showing any signs! This makes them a possible source of infection, primarily via their droppings, for more vulnerable types of poultry.

The USDA routinely monitors for avian influenza cases in domestic and wild birds to better understand and predict the impact of this virus. Currently, *highly pathogenic* (meaning highly infectious and deadly) avian influenza, aka **HPAI**, has been identified in wild waterfowl and domestic poultry in Europe and Asia. The detections this year are notable because the amount of HPAI is similar to that found during the 2014/2015 season, when HPAI infected many domestic poultry farms in the United States. This information should be used by poultry flock managers to be proactive in protecting the health of their birds.

How does HPAI get from one continent to another?

This map shows the patterns of wild bird migrations in predictable areas called "flyways." As birds move within a flyway, they can spread infectious disease

among each other, and it circulates within that flyway. The overlap in these flyways allows for gradual dispersal of infectious disease.



Source: FAO Agriculture Department; Animal Production and Health Division

The likelihood of certain diseases arriving at your coop varies throughout the year. Weather, seasonal agricultural activities and patterns of wildlife movement all affect disease transmission in different ways. That's why regular biosecurity practice is important year-round. Here's how to stay in the know to protect your birds:

Check out the [Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Animal Health website](#) to learn about any important avian health advisories

Stay up to date with the [USDA's Defend the Flock](#) programming

Connect with the [University of Maine Veterinary Diagnostic Lab](#) and [Cooperative Extension's Poultry Management](#) experts

Keep in touch with Maine poultry groups and other producers- news spreads almost as fast as disease!