

HPAI Protocol for Education Program Clients

Until further notice we have put the following in place. If booking a program it will be with the understanding the following has been read entirely and you will be assisting us in protecting our birds even if we are not taking a bird to your program.

You may have heard that HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) is now in Ohio. Here is what we know so far:

- It is **highly contagious** to birds.
- Impacts domestic poultry and wild bird populations.
- It **causes death** in all species of birds within 72 hours except for waterfowl and shorebirds (geese, swans and ducks, gulls) who are asymptomatic carriers, some may show symptoms.
- In rare cases humans can get it, but it is like a cold and only in people who have had direct contact with poultry.
- No cases have been reported of humans getting it through eating the meat from the birds. The virus is killed through cooking so you do not have to worry about eating potentially contaminated meat.
- It spreads through blood, feces, saliva, nasal and eye excretions, and fomites (fomites are materials that can carry the disease; clothing, shoes, gloves, utensils, furniture, etc.).
- It can live in the environment for 21+ days, freezing temps do not kill it, incubation period is typically 3-5 days but has been observed in some species over 21 days.
- It is assumed to be here **forever**.

What this means for programs:

- We are going to assume every waterfowl and shorebird (and their feces, saliva, blood, etc.) has the disease. This disease is also aerosolized so even if the waterfowl are not currently congregating in a location, it can still linger. This might mean taking extreme steps to keep our birds safe, including not taking them to various types of programs.
- All outdoor programs will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis:
 - We will not be taking birds to outdoor booth displays where waterfowl tend to congregate; parks, fields, near lakes and ponds, etc.
 - Often waterfowl are present on most school properties so if the program is outside we cannot bring our birds and will need to be notified ahead of time.
- Indoor programs we can still bring birds, but we need to be able to have a clear path to the building where waterfowl have not walked so the disease is not spread by our shoes.

What we need you to do to help us protect our ambassadors:

- If it is an indoor program, we will need to be warned ahead of time which door to use and where to park so we are not potentially walking through waterfowl feces.
- If it is an outdoor program, we will need a location where waterfowl have not been as HPAI can live in the environment for 21+ days.
- If it is an outdoor program, booth display, where it is unavoidable that there is or have been waterfowl, I need to know ahead of time to plan accordingly what animals I am bringing, we cannot bring our ambassador birds.

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- **PLEASE NOTE:**
 - This disease can be spread on the bottoms of people's shoes, car tires, dog feet and anything that touches the ground and stay for 21+ days on surfaces.
 - We reserve the right to not bring out our birds out of the car if there is a potential hazard to their health. The disease is highly contagious and will kill our ambassadors if we are not careful and take the appropriate steps. We will not take any chances.
 - In years past the state and feds said ambassadors could not leave site, they may require this again and I will inform you if this happens and make the appropriate changes. As of right now we have not been told we cannot take the birds offsite.
 - **Nothing that we have can touch the ground, even in buildings as people's shoes and wheels from carts can carry the disease.**

What you can do to protect your animals and other birds:

- Your pet birds can also get this disease. If you are walking in a park and then go home to pet birds, especially backyard chickens, ducks, quail etc. they can get this disease too. We recommend cleaning your shoes off by scraping off the debris and then spraying your shoes with a disinfectant.
- If you have a pond where there are waterfowl or scavenger birds I would assume it will be there if it is not already and it can spread from there and you or your pets if they walk near the pond.
- If you have bird feeders that attract waterfowl we suggest removing them as ground-feeding songbirds can spread the disease and get sick themselves.
- Raptors and other scavenger birds are most likely to catch the disease as they might eat waterfowl or other birds that are sick from the disease. They can also get it by eating contaminated meat.
- We suggest having a spare pair of shoes in your car to put on after walking where waterfowl live and then disinfect your walking shoes by scraping off the debris and then spraying them with a disinfectant solution.

We are counting on you to help us keep our ambassador birds safe! If you have any questions, please reach out to Jamie at jforbush@natures-nursery.org.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!