

Oregon reports rise in avian flu cases among migratory birds, public urged to report sick wildlife

SALEM, Ore.— With migratory waterfowl back in Oregon for the winter, the state is again seeing an increase in cases of avian flu and mortality in wild birds, especially among cackling geese congregating in the Willamette Valley. Oregon is the first state to report a new spike in detections this fall.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) was first detected in wild birds in North America in December 2021 and in Oregon in May 2022. Unlike previous outbreaks of HPAI in 2005 and 2014-15, this specific strain of the virus (H5N1) did not disappear by the following spring. The H5N1 strain continues to change and circulate in wild birds and is also infecting backyard poultry flocks, dairy herds and other livestock including pigs in Oregon. It has also infected farm workers in 14 states.

Waterfowl are the natural host of avian influenza and the virus moves throughout North America during spring and fall waterfowl migrations. In Oregon, most mortality in wild waterfowl occurs in cackling geese, especially juvenile birds, however the virus is also commonly detected in wild ducks harvested by hunters.

Although many Low Pathogenic strains of avian flu naturally occur in wild waterfowl, detections of Highly Pathogenic strains in wild birds are less fre-

quent. Typically, HPAI does not cause large-scale mortality in wild waterfowl or other groups of wild birds but often causes severe illness and death in domestic chickens and turkeys.

However, the current H5N1 strain has caused increased mortality for wild waterfowl (especially geese), shorebirds, raptors and scavengers such as vultures. Currently, there have been 10,400 confirmed detections in 153 species of wild birds throughout the U.S. This strain has also been detected in at least 20 wild mammalian species including three marine mammals and scavenging carnivores such as coyotes, foxes and skunks that have likely fed on infected birds. HPAI has been confirmed in dairy cattle in 14 states, including California and Idaho. Oregon has confirmed HPAI in poultry and recently in a pig from a noncommercial farm.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [humans appear to be at low risk](#) for infection with the current H5N1 strain.

Wildlife managers continue to monitor for the virus by testing wild birds found dead and sampling live birds and birds harvested by hunters.

What do to if you encounter groups of sick or dead birds ODFW asks that members of the public report groups of sick or dead wild birds to the Wildlife Health lab at

866-968-2600 or wildlife.health@odfw.oregon.gov. ODFW staff are monitoring and tracking continued mortalities. Samples may be collected in cases of large groups of dead birds or when multiple different species are involved.

Typical symptoms in wild waterfowl include cloudy eyes, head shaking, swimming in circles, and incoordination. However, HPAI can occur in dabbling duck species that show no signs of disease. These are the carrier host species that spread the virus to other birds and wetlands. Infected wild mammals may be found sick, dead or acting neurologically abnormal after consuming an infected bird and should also be reported.

ODFW veterinarians recommend that you do not handle wildlife that is sick or found dead. If it is necessary to dispose of a carcass, use a shovel or wear impermeable gloves, wash hands with soap and water and change clothing before having contact with domestic poultry or pet birds.

What hunters need to know Hunters may come in contact with infected waterfowl during the hunting season and should always practice the following safe bird handling and cooking techniques, especially this season due to HPAI:

- Do not harvest or consume birds that are obviously sick or found dead.

- Field dress and prepare gamebirds outdoors or in a well-ventilated area
- Wear rubber or latex gloves and eye protection when handling and cleaning game birds. A N95 respirator or well-fitting facemask (e.g. surgical mask) is an optional extra layer of protection and is referenced in the current CDC guidelines.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke or touch your face when handling birds.
- Keep the game bird and its juices away from other foods.
- Thoroughly clean knives and any other equipment or surfaces that touch birds. Use a solution of one third cup of chlorine bleach per one gallon of water.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after handling birds (or with alcohol-based hand products if your hands are not visibly soiled).
- Cook all game meat thoroughly (up to at least 165° F) to kill disease organisms including bacteria, viruses and parasites. Use a food thermometer to ensure the inside of the bird has reached at least 165° F.
- Do not feed dogs raw meat, organs or other tissue from harvested waterfowl.

Falconers are advised to avoid hunting waterfowl and other waterbirds during the HPAI outbreak because of the risk it presents to raptors. HPAI continues to sicken and kill raptors that come into contact with infected avian prey or carcasses.

Mustangs defeat Waldport Irish 58-0

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The Waldport Irish tried an onside kick off to open the game that the Mustangs recovered. The unsuccessful try by the Irish gave the Mustangs great field position at the Waldport 45-yard line. On the first play from scrimmage, Quarterback Mason Orem handed the ball off to Hayden McMahon and he sprinted 45 yards for a Heppner touchdown. Hayden then ran the ball in for the 2-pt. conversion to make the score 8-0 just ten seconds into the game.

Waldport couldn't move the ball on their first possession and had to punt the ball from their own 9-yard line. The Mustangs got the ball to start their second drive of the game at the 50-yard line. On the first play for Heppner, Orem completed a pass to Caleb George that covered 23 yards and then Hayden McMahon ran the ball for 11. The Mustangs scored on the next play when Zach Brown took the handoff and powered his way into the end zone from 16 yards out. That made the score of the game 14-0 just four minutes into the game.

The Heppner defense forced another Waldport punt that gave the Mustangs the ball at the Irish 45-yard line. On the very next play, Alakae Rodriguez took a handoff and with some fancy footwork scampered to the end zone for another touchdown. The score was 20-0 with five minutes left in the first quarter.

Waldport seemed to settle down a little bit and

put together a drive. That was until Ryan Haugen sacked the Irish quarterback for a 10-yard loss. It forced a Waldport punt that Keaton Coiner returned 10 yards to the Heppner 33-yard line. The Mustangs then put together a 5-play drive that was highlighted by a Orem to George pass play that covered 14 yards and a Zach Brown run of 43 yards to the 10 yard line. Heppner scored the touchdown when Brown pounded the ball in from 5 yards out for the score. Orem passed the ball to George for the 2-pt. conversion to make the score 28-0 early in the second quarter.

On their next drive, the Irish turned the ball over on downs at their own 41-yard line giving the Mustangs great field position. Four plays later the Mustangs scored when the Tripp Stewart ran the ball in from 29 yards out for the touchdown. Orem called his own number and scored the 2-pt. conversion to make the score 36-0 with six minutes left until halftime.

Just two plays into the next Waldport drive, Keaton Coiner put a big hit on the Irish running back and he fumbled the ball. Nick Wenberg jumped on the ball and recovered it to give the Mustangs a great field position again at the Waldport 39-yard line. Rodriguez then ran the ball for 9 yards, Stewart went for 3 and then Orem hit George with a 14-yard pass completion for a first down. Wenberg finished the drive, that he started with the fumble recovery, when he ran the ball in from 13 yards out for another

Mustang touchdown. Orem then threw the ball to Keaton Coiner for the 2-pt. conversion to make the score 44-0 at the half.

The second half of the game would be played with a running clock because of the Mustangs being ahead by more than 35 points. Heppner kicked off to start the second half and forced the Irish to punt the ball on their first drive. Heppner then went on a 12-play, 62-yard drive that ate up over six minutes of the game clock to get another score. Caleb George scored the touchdown on a 3-yard run. That made the score 50-0 with just over a minute to play in the third quarter.

On the ensuing Heppner kickoff, the Irish fumbled the ball right in front of the Mustang bench area. Joseph Albitre picked up the ball and ran it in for the touchdown on a 34-yard scoop-and-score. The new quarterback Caylan Proudfoot scrambled and then found Jackson Coiner open in the end zone and hit him with a perfectly placed pass that Jackson caught for the 2-pt. conversion. That made the score of the game 58-0 as the third quarter ended.

The Heppner coaches put many of the younger Mustang players in to gain some valuable playoff game experience. The teams traded several more possessions and then Albitre made an acrobatic interception of the Waldport quarterback. Albitre jumped high and spun in order to catch the ball, then when he came down, he took it back 35 yards to the Irish 10-yard

line. The Mustangs were content to let the clock run out and end the game with a 58-0 victory.

Heppner dominated the game with the Irish. The Mustangs finished with 18 first downs to only 4 for Waldport. Heppner had 385 total yards in the game compared to 63 for the Irish. The Mustangs ran the ball for 334 yards and passed it for 51.

Orem finished the game 3-5 by passing the ball for 51 yards and George caught all 3 of the passes with a long of 23 yards.

Brown led the team in rushing with 80 yards on 5 carries and he also scored 2 touchdowns running the ball. Hayden McMahon was next with 67 yards and a touchdown while Rodriguez finished with 54 yards and a rushing touchdown. George ran the ball for 44 yards and a score, Orem had 37 and Stewart 36 yards and a touchdown. Wenberg had a carry for 13 yards and a touchdown, Zion Ramos had 1 carry for 4 and John Lindsay rushed for 2 yards.

Keaton Coiner led the team in tackles with 8. Next were George, Jaime Cavan and Kaden King with 6 tackles each. Landon McMahon followed with 5 tackles and with 4 tackles each were Wenberg and Stewart. Ryan Haugen had 3 tackles and Brown had 2. Finishing with 1 tackle each were Hayden McMahon, Lane Critchlow, John Lindsay, Owen Guerra, Andrew Lindsay, Albitre and Rodriguez.

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