

AVIAN FLU



IS IT SAFE TO GO HUNTING?

It is safe to go hunting during Goose Break this spring, whether in Eeyou Istchee, or in the South. Hunters should check in regularly for updates and recommendations with the Cree Trappers Association (CTA) or http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/avian_influenza_biweekly_reports.php

WHAT IS AVIAN FLU?

Avian flu (also known as H5N1 virus) is a flu virus that affects wild birds (including migratory waterfowl and shore birds) and poultry.

CAN PEOPLE CATCH IT?

Very rarely, it can spread from birds and infect humans. This can happen through prolonged and close contact with a sick or dead bird. If you get very sick after handling wild birds please consult a doctor or a nurse at the clinic.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF AVIAN FLU IN A BIRD?

Sick birds may show unusual behavior or signs:

- ⚠️ Difficulty walking, standing straight or flying.
- ⚠️ Head or neck that is tilted.
- ⚠️ Clear or cloudy discharge from the mouth, nose, ears, or vent (cloaca).
- ⚠️ Appearing abnormally thin or weak.

However, it is important to note that not all sick birds show symptoms. So always practicing safe handling and proper hygiene are important to keep the hunter and family safe.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE OR FIND A SICK BIRD?

If you see or find a sick or dead bird, do not touch it with your bare hands. Cover it to prevent predators from eating it and possibly spreading Avian flu. Call your local CTA office to report it.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE WHILE HUNTING, HANDLING AND COOKING THE BIRD?

Precautions to help reduce your risk include:

- ⚠️ Avoiding contact with sick or dead birds that you have not shot or harvested.
- ⚠️ Wearing gloves and a mask while handling game.
- ⚠️ Washing hands (with soap and water or hand sanitizer) immediately after handling game, butchering and cooking.
- ⚠️ Plucking and gutting birds in open areas with good airflow (teepee) with access to handwashing.
- ⚠️ Cooking all meat thoroughly to 74°C (165°F) or higher, or until juices run clear (no blood in it).

For more information, contact your local CTA office or visit

creehealth.org/health-tips/what-avian-flu

