



SPOT REPORT

HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA H5N2 CONFIRMED IN WILD MALLARD DUCK IN MONTANA

09 January 2017

FEDERAL EDITION

Current Event Status (Undetermined)

On 09 January 2017, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N2 in a hunter-harvested wild mallard duck in Fergus County, Montana. There are no human infections, or mortalities among domestic poultry associated with this finding. This strain is a Eurasian/North American reassortant H5N2, similar to the H5N2 strain associated with an outbreak of HPAI in the U.S. in 2014-2015.

This is the first state to report HPAI in 2017. In 2016, two HPAI detections were reported: one in a commercial turkey flock in Dubois County, Indiana (H7N8), and the other in a wild mallard duck in Fairbanks, Alaska (H5N2). In 2014-2015, the U.S. experienced a multi-state HPAI outbreak involving the H5N8, H5N2 and H5N1 strains.

Why We Are Reporting on This Event

Novel and emerging avian influenza viruses remain a global priority due to their potential economic impact, effects on animal health, and the risk of spillover into human populations.

The 2014-2015 HPAI outbreak in the U.S. was the largest and most economically impactful animal health emergency in U.S. history. U.S. federal and state authorities maintain vigilance with HPAI surveillance and response efforts.

Worsening

No Change

Improving

Undetermined

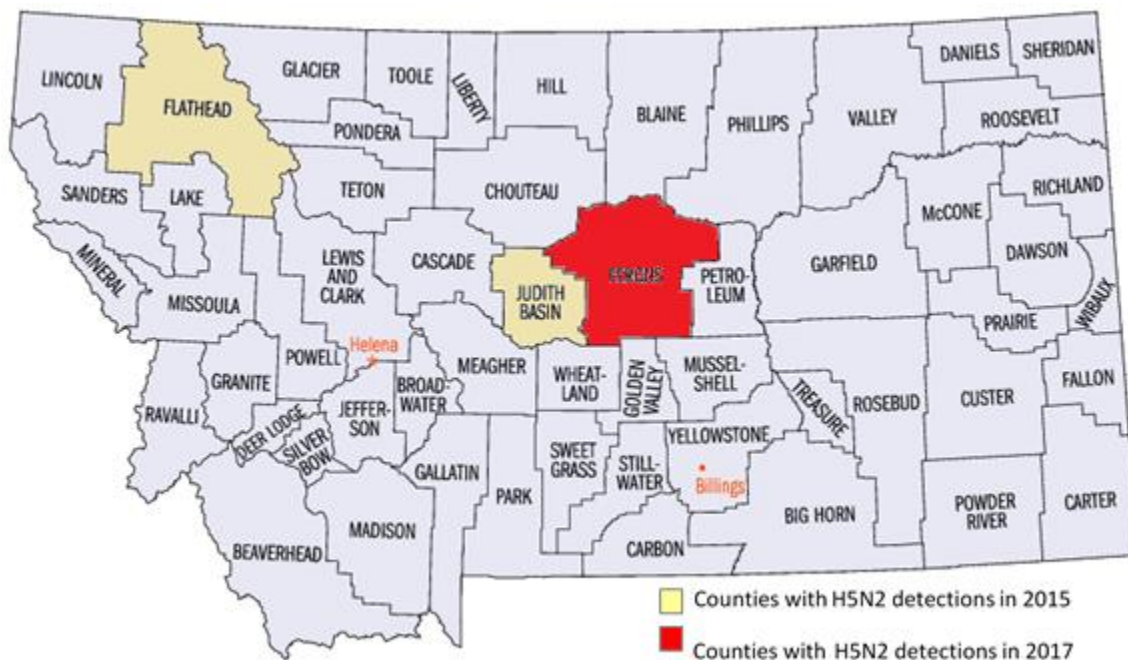


Figure 1: A confirmed case of HPAI H5N2 was reported in a hunter-harvested wild mallard duck in Fergus County, Montana on 09 January 2017. Two previous H5N2 detections were reported in Montana in 2015 in a domestic poultry flock in Judith Basin County, and a captive gyrfalcon in Flathead County.



On 09 January 2017, the USDA/APHIS confirmed HPAI H5N2 in a hunter-harvested wild mallard duck in Fergus County, Montana. The strain sequenced is a Eurasian/North American reassortant H5N2, similar to the H5N2 strain involved in an outbreak of HPAI in the United States in 2014-2015, which also included H5N8 and H5N1 strains. No human infections with H5 viruses have occurred in the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to the general public from these HPAI H5 infections to be low.

This is the first detection of HPAI in the U.S. in 2017. Two detections occurred in 2016. The first detection was reported in mid-January, when a commercial turkey flock consisting of 43,000 birds tested positive for the H7N8 strain. At the end of August, a wild mallard duck from a state wildlife refuge in Fairbanks, Alaska tested positive for H5N2.

In December 2014, HPAI was detected in the Pacific Northwest. A twenty-one state outbreak followed, lasting until June 2015. The outbreak affected 211 commercial, and 21 backyard poultry premises, and consisted of backyard poultry flocks, wild birds, or captive wild birds. The HPAI strains involved were H5N2, H5N8, and H5N1. Additionally, two HPAI detections in wild mallard ducks were reported in late August 2015 and mid-November 2015.

Detection of HPAI in commercial birds is of greater significance than detection in wild birds since wild waterfowl, such as ducks, are natural reservoirs of avian influenza viruses. Furthermore, the virus is more apt to spread between domestic flocks and lead to a wide-scale outbreak, if secure biosecurity procedures are not observed.

Following the 2014-2015 HPAI outbreak in the U.S., there were significant planning and capacity building efforts among Federal and State animal health officials to prepare for an anticipated resurgence of the virus in the Fall 2015 or Spring 2016 associated with the wild bird migrations. HPAI in wild birds anywhere in the world has the potential to circulate globally through migratory flyways, affecting other regions; including the U.S. Additionally, it is possible for a low-pathogenic strain to mutate and become highly pathogenic. With lessons learned from the 2014-2015 HPAI outbreak in the U.S., government and industry organizations and officials have made several efforts to strengthen biosecurity and safeguard the U.S. poultry industry from any spread of HPAI, if it were to be detected in U.S. poultry flocks.

NBIC will continue to monitor the situation, and provide updates in the daily Monitoring List.

References:

[USDA/APHIS HPAI H5N2 in a Wild Mallard Duck in Montana](#)
[HPAI H5N2 in Montana in 2015](#)