



A message addressing concerns about **Bird Flu** for **North Slope Subsistence Hunters**



What is bird flu?

Like many animals, birds naturally carry different kinds of flu viruses that are NOT harmful to humans, but recently a more serious type of bird flu has developed. The technical name of this specific bird flu is called H5N1. This bird flu began in Southeast Asia where wild birds and people caught it from chickens. It has spread to Europe and Asia, but has not been found in North America.



Is bird flu found in Alaska?

NO. There are no positive cases of bird flu in Alaskan birds that have been sampled. A team of state and federal agencies will be testing North Slope birds for bird flu this spring and summer.



Can we get bird flu from the birds we hunt?

The risk of catching bird flu from hunted birds is extremely low. There are no cases of humans catching bird flu from wild birds. Only people in close contact with domesticated poultry farms are at the most risk. No one has caught this virus from eating a fully-cooked bird, either domestic or wild.



How worried should we be about bird flu?

Hunters should not be overly concerned about harvesting birds this spring and summer. There is no need to stop subsistence practices. Just follow normal recommended practices for safe handling and cleaning of game.

What safety guidelines should we follow?

- Don't handle birds that appear sick or you find dead
- Wash your hands and knife with soap and water after cleaning birds
- If cleaning supplies are not available, use common sense and avoid touching your mouth and face
- Cook birds and game thoroughly.

Where can we go for more information?

For more information or to report sick or dead birds:

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Toll Free 1-866-527-3358 (1-866-5 BRD FLU), or your local refuge office.

Website: alaska.fws.gov/media/avian_influenza/index.htm

North Slope Borough, Department of Wildlife Management

Phone: 852-0350