

## DEC ANNOUNCES SUSPECTED CASE OF HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA AT REYNOLDS GAME FARM

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced a suspected outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus at Reynolds Game Farm affecting the farm's pheasant population. DEC began investigation over suspicious deaths on March 20, and initial test results indicate a possible outbreak of the H5N1 avian influenza (AI) virus. DEC is working closely with animal health experts at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratory to determine next steps at the farm.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the recent HPAI detections in birds does not present an immediate public health concern. HPAI cases in humans are rare, and symptoms are typically mild. The risk of a person becoming infected is low.

AI is a strain of the influenza virus that primarily affects birds, including commercial and backyard poultry flocks. HPAI has been circulating in wild birds in North America since early 2022, and has been previously confirmed in wild birds in Tompkins County, where Reynolds Game Farm is located.

The Game Farm employs rigorous biosecurity protocols, including fencing and overhead netting to prevent large birds like hawks, owls, ducks, geese, and gulls from getting into the pens. Staff also conduct regular disease surveillance. The pheasant flock at Reynolds is a USDA National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) certified flock. The NPIP is a State-Federal cooperative testing and certification program for poultry breeding flocks that includes surveillance for AI, pullorum disease, fowl typhoid, and other infectious diseases.

DEC will continue to work with partners at AGM and USDA in a swift and thorough response to the suspected outbreak.