MARYLAND ONE HEALTH BULLETIN

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The Return of the Maryland One Health Bulletin!

The Maryland One Health Bulletin (MOHB) was originally published in 2011 as a collaborative effort between the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Department of Health, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The original purpose for the MOHB was to facilitate communication about zoonotic and other diseases of concern in Maryland with veterinarians, public health practitioners, wildlife professionals and rehabilitators, and other interested parties. This included ensuring that readers knew how and where to report reportable and other diseases of concern. Publication of the MOHB was suspended after 13 volumes due to resource limitations.

After several years in hiatus, the MOHB is back! Information in the MOHB is compiled by a team of former public practice veterinarians from publicly available and trustworthy sources. The purpose of the MOHB stays true to its original intent: to serve as a unified source of information on zoonotic and other diseases of concern in Maryland for veterinarians and others on the front lines. Readers can reach the MOHB team with feedback or suggestions about the MOHB at MDOneHealthBulletin@gmail.com.

Zoonotic and Other Animal Diseases of Concern in Maryland

Table 1. New or Ongoing Morbidity and Mortality Animal and Zoonotic Disease Events in Maryland

Estimated First Onset Date	Estimated End Date	Diagnosis	Species Affected	Area Affected	Cases to Date	Lead Agency
2026	Ongoing	Equine Herpes Virus (EHV)	Equine	Statewide; various counties	4 cases year to date	MDA
2026	Ongoing	Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)	Equine	Statewide; various counties	8 cases year to date	MDA
2026	Ongoing	Strangles	Equine	Statewide; various counties	12 cases year to date	MDA

CHECK OUT THE LIST OF REPORTABLE ANIMAL DISEASES IN MARYLAND.

For questions regarding specific disease events, please contact the lead agency noted, as shown below. This contact information is for use by Maryland veterinarians and health professionals:

- **MDA - Maryland Department of Agriculture**: animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov, 410-841-5810.
- **MDH - Maryland Department of Health**, Center for Zoonotic and Vector-borne Disease, mdh.czvbd@maryland.gov, 410-767-5649.
- **MD DNR - Maryland Department of Natural Resources**: customerservice.dnr@maryland, 1-800-628-9944 or 1-877-463-6497.

Ongoing Threat of Highly Pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza

Since the beginning of 2026, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has responded to five confirmed cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1, in Maryland, and a total of seven cases on the Delmarva Peninsula. The last confirmed case was reported in March 2026; however, the virus has not been eradicated in the U.S. Therefore, the risk of the virus returning to Maryland and Delmarva, especially during wild bird migration season and winter, remains elevated.

HPAI H5N1 in Poultry, Wild Birds, and Dairy Cattle

The region's first poultry case was confirmed on February 23, 2022, in a commercial poultry operation in New Castle County, Delaware. Every year since then, Maryland and Delaware Departments of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have responded to multiple cases of HPAI in poultry and wild birds throughout Delmarva. A summary of the 2026 Delmarva poultry cases to date is detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. HPAI H5N1 Cases in Maryland and Delaware to Date, 2026

Date	County	Flock Type	No. of Birds	Case Status
30-Jan-2026	Caroline, MD	Commercial Broiler Production	37,300	Closed
17-Feb-2026	Wicomico, MD	Commercial Broiler Production	77,600	Closed
26-Feb-2026	Caroline, MD	Commercial Broiler Production	59,900	Closed
27-Feb-2026	Kent, DE	Commercial Broiler Production	32,800	Closed
02-Mar-2026	Caroline, MD	Commercial Broiler Production	95,600	Closed
02-Mar-2026	Sussex, DE	WOAH Non-Poultry	4	Closed
13-Mar-2026	Cecil, MD	Commercial Table Egg Pullets	354,000	Closed

HPAI is an airborne respiratory virus that spreads easily among poultry through nasal and eye secretions, as well as manure. The virus can spread from flock to flock in several ways, including through wild birds, contact with infected poultry, and contaminated equipment, clothing and shoes of caretakers. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern. As a reminder, proper handling and cooking of all poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F is recommended as a general food safety precaution.

The same HPAI virus was detected in dairy cattle beginning in Texas in March 2024. **No cattle cases have been detected in Maryland. Maryland has moved to the Stage 4 Unaffected State under the National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS), so cattle moving from Maryland to other states do not have to be tested.** In other states, 89 confirmed cattle cases have been detected so far in 2026. MDA Animal Health conducts ongoing surveillance of milk prior to pasteurization as part of the NMTS to monitor the national milk supply and dairy herds. **4104 bulk tank milk tests and 712 cattle tests have been completed to date.**

Wild birds can become infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and may show no signs of illness. They can carry the virus to new areas during migration, potentially exposing domestic poultry to the disease**. In 2026, 30 sick, dead, or hunter-harvested wild birds were tested as sentinels for susceptible wild bird populations and confirmed infected with HPAI**. Since the beginning of the current outbreak in Maryland (January 2022), 128 wild birds have been confirmed by USDA – mainly waterfowl, and raptors (bald eagles, hawks, vultures, and owls). Black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) mortality events were common throughout this four-year period. For more info, see Detections of HPAI in Wild Birds.

The continuing presence of HPAI in wild birds poses a risk of infection to commercial and non-commercial poultry in Maryland during the coming months. With the onset of cooler weather and the migratory bird season, veterinarians are urged to work with poultry farmers, backyard poultry owners, and livestock owners to ensure that strict biosecurity measures are followed to minimize the risk of HPAI infection, including:

CRITICAL BIOSECURITY MEASURES

- **Clean clothes and shoes between each flock and herd visit.**
- **Clean tools and equipment between each flock and herd visit.**
- **Wash hands between each flock and herd visit.**
- **Prevent wild birds from entering farm areas.**
- **Limit visitors to people who need to be there.**

- **Report sick wild birds to the MD DNR/ USDA Wildlife Service Call Center: 877-463-6497.**
- **Report sick poultry to the Maryland Department of Agriculture at: 410-841-5810.**

Biosecurity handouts for clients are provided on Pages 6-8.

More Biosecurity Resources and information on Avian Influenza are available online:

- USDA APHIS — Biosecurity Basics
- USDA APHIS — Dairy Cattle Biosecurity Measures
- High Path Avian Influenza - What You Need to Know
- MDA Avian Influenza in Poultry Flocks and USDA-APHIS at USDA APHIS — 2022 HPAI.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service https://www.Fws.gov/avian-influenza

HPAI in Humans and All Other Domestic and Wild Mammals

HPAI H5N1 can infect humans. Farm workers, including veterinarians, are particularly at risk of infection from infected poultry and cattle. CDC provides Key Public Health Prevention Recommendations for HPAI A(H5N1).

HPAI H5N1 has also been detected in 7 U.S. domestic cats in 2026, for a total of 156 since the beginning of the outbreak in 2022. Infected cats often develop a fever, loss of appetite, and lethargy early in their infections; signs can worsen rapidly to include nasal/ocular discharge, sneezing, coughing, respiratory difficulty, and neurologic signs such as incoordination, tremors, seizures, and blindness. Up to 70% of infected cats die of their infections. Out of an abundance of caution, any cat showing signs of H5N1 infection should not be allowed to interact closely with people until veterinary consultation has been carried out. Cornell Feline Health Center provides more information in H5N1 Avian Influenza and Your Cat.

USDA tracks HPAI in all mammals here: Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Mammals. As Avian Influenza continues to affect poultry, mammals, and humans worldwide, world organizations have developed a long term One Health strategy, "Global Framework to Accelerate Action on Avian Influenza".

Rabies in Animals and Humans

221 confirmed rabies cases were identified in Maryland through October 24, 2026. Raccoons accounted for 59% of confirmed animal rabies cases, with bats (11%) and foxes (10%) the next most common animals confirmed rabid. The most common domestic species confirmed with rabies was cats, which account for 8% of cases (16 cases). To date in 2026, 3 rabid beavers have been confirmed, all of which exposed humans who subsequently were assessed to determine the need for rabies postexposure prophylaxis. Rabies continues to be prevalent in wild animals in Maryland and the U.S., putting unvaccinated domestic animals and humans at continued risk of exposure and death. Current guidelines for handling potential and confirmed rabid animals and requirements for rabies vaccination of domestic animals are provided here:

- Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016
- Code of Maryland Regulations, Rabies, COMAR 10.06.02
- Request for Rabies Vaccine Delay (online form)

Rabies is a zoonotic viral disease that is nearly 100% fatal in all mammals, but it is preventable in humans when post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is given according to guidance after an exposure and before patient symptoms start. From July through August 2026, CDC received 17% more rabies-related inquiries than during the same period in 2025. This increase prompted CDC to issue a Health Alert, which can be read for more information at https://www.cdc.gov/han/php/notices/han00533.html.

The Maryland Department of Health offers a free online course for healthcare providers and public health professionals about rabies, the approach used in evaluating patients for rabies virus exposure, and the administration of PEP as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The course can be accessed on the Rabies PEP Training Module tab on the MDH rabies website.

Maryland Animal Rabies Surveillance

The Maryland Department of Health tracks animal rabies cases by jurisdiction (county) and species weekly, and data can be found on their website. Table 3 presents a summary of recent animal rabies data.

Table 3. Cumulative Wild and Domestic Animal Rabies Cases by Jurisdiction as of October 24, 2026

LABORATORY CONFIRMED ANIMAL RABIES IN MARYLAND, 2026										
Species	Bat	Cat	Deer	Dog	Fox	Groundhog	Raccoon	Skunk	Other	Total
Jurisdiction										
Allegany	2	2			1		1			6
Anne Arundel	6						3			9
Baltimore	2	2			3	1	13			21
Baltimore City	1				5	1	12			19
Calvert	1						3			4
Caroline										0
Carroll					3	1	8	1		13
Cecil		1					4			5
Charles	1	1				1	1	2		6
Dorchester	1						3			4
Frederick		1			2	1	10	1	3	18
Garrett							3		1	4
Harford	2	1			5	3	22			33
Howard					2		6			8
Kent										0
Montgomery	3	1					13		1	18
Prince George's							2	1		3
Queen Anne's		2					4			6
Saint Mary's	1						3	5		9
Somerset	1						1			2
Talbot							2			2
Washington	4	7			1	1	5	1		19
Wicomico							9			9
Worcester							2	1		3
Total	25	18	0	0	22	9	130	12	5	221

Data through October 24, 2026

Laboratory Confirmed Rabies in Maryland by Species, 2026		
Species	Total	%
Bat	25	11%
Cat	18	8%
Deer	0	0%
Dog	0	0%
Fox	22	10%
Groundhog	9	4%
Raccoon	130	59%
Skunk	12	5%
Beaver	3	1%
Pig	1	0%
Sheep	1	0%
		0%
Positive	221	100%

Laboratory Confirmed Rabies in Maryland by Month, 2026	
Month	Total
January	10
February	16
March	25
April	25
May	14
June	17
July	23
August	34
September	36
October	21
November	
December	
Total	221

Backyard Poultry: HPAI Protection Guide

Signs of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Birds

- Sudden & high number of deaths
- Drop in egg production
- Bluish comb, wattles, legs
- Nasal discharge & sneezing
- Stumbling or falling
- Lack of energy & appetite
- Swelling of eyelids & comb
- Difficulty breathing
- Twisting of head & neck
- Diarrhea

Biosecurity Measures



Limit Movement
Monitor & record all movement of people, vehicles, animals on farm



Indoor Housing
Keep birds indoors or in covered outdoor enclosures



Disinfection
Clean all equipment, vehicles, footwear, and contact items with appropriate disinfectants



Avoid Contact
Keep flock away from wild or migratory birds (waterfowl)
No poultry swaps

If You Notice Signs of HPAI:

MARYLAND
Email: md.birdflu@maryland.gov
Call: 410.841.5810

DELAWARE
Email: poultry.health@delaware.gov
Call: 410.841.5810

Do NOT move sick or dead birds off-site



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Scan for more information on protecting your flock

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Aves de Corral: Guía de Protección contra IAAP

Señales de Influenza Aviar Altamente Patógena en Aves

- Muertes inmediatas y en gran número
- Disminución en la producción de huevos
- Cresta, barbas y patas azuladas
- Secreción nasal y estornudos
- Tropiezos o caídas
- Falta de energía y apetito
- Engrosamiento de párpados y cresta
- Dificultad de respiro
- Torsión de cabeza y cuello
- Diarrea

Medidas de Bioseguridad



Limitar Movimiento
Monitorear y registrar todo movimiento de personas, vehículos, animales en la granja



Alojamiento Interior
Mantener las aves en interior o en recintos exteriores cubiertos



Desinfección
Limpiar todo el equipo, vehículos, zapatos, y artículos de contacto con desinfectantes apropiados



Evitar Contacto
Mantener las aves alejadas de aves silvestres o migratorias (aves acuáticas). No intercambiar aves de corral

Si Nota Señales de IAAP:

MARYLAND

Correo: md.birdflu@maryland.gov

Teléfono: 410.841.5810

DELAWARE

Correo: poultry.health@delaware.gov

Teléfono: 410.841.5810

NO traslade aves enfermas o muertas fuera del sitio



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Escanee para más información sobre cómo proteger su parvada

Los programas, actividades e instalaciones universitarias están disponibles para todos sin distinción de raza, color, sexo, identidad o expresión de género, orientación sexual, estado civil, edad, origen nacional, afiliación política, discapacidad física o mental, religión, condición de veterano protegido, información genética, apariencia personal o cualquier otra clase legalmente protegida.



FARM BIOSECURITY

160 THOUSAND

There were over 160,000 cattle and calves in Maryland in January 2024!



Maryland has a robust commercial poultry industry in addition to thousands of backyard flocks.

Footwear

Have designated footwear to tend to your animals. This footwear should never be worn off the farm. Rubber boots are waterproof and easily cleaned and disinfected.

Clothing

Change clothing upon returning from work, errands, hunting or any other off-site activity. Visitors should wear protective clothing if entering areas where livestock or poultry are kept.

Animal Traffic

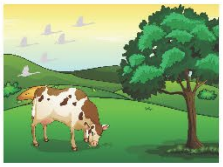
Pets, rodents, wild birds, predators and other pests can bring diseases onto a farm. Keep coops and barns secure and feed cleaned up to deter animal traffic.

Report unusual illnesses, deaths and high mortalities to Maryland Department of Agriculture or your veterinarian.

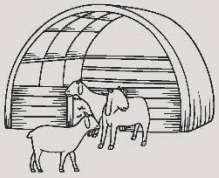
Dead animals should be promptly removed and properly disposed of in a manner that will not attract wildlife.

Clean and disinfect your cell phone regularly!

Restrict animals from eating and drinking in areas accessible to waterfowl! One dropping of goose feces can contain enough virus to infect millions of birds!



Ensure that any equipment used in and around the coops and barns is clean and disinfected.



Quarantine new animals and animals that have been off the farm. Species-specific biosecurity screenings should be performed before the animals are released from the quarantine area.



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