



# TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD

## Board of Health

[www.marblehead.org/health](http://www.marblehead.org/health)

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### **ATTENTION:**

Dear Animal Permit Holder:

January 29, 2025

As you may know, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has announced that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been detected in poultry in Essex County. All domestic poultry in Massachusetts may be at risk of exposure.

Avian Flu, also known as “bird flu,” is a common influenza strain that can spread from birds to humans through saliva, nasal secretion and feces. Waterbirds including shorebirds and waterfowl, especially dabbling ducks like mallards, are most likely to carry the virus.

While Avian Flu is not common among humans, it is very contagious among birds. This flu can be fatal for birds like chickens and turkeys.

If residents have a flock of chickens, please make sure that good biosecurity is being used to protect the flock. Flock owners and visitors may accidentally expose their flocks to HPAI through contaminated shoes, clothing, or equipment. Flock owners are also encouraged to keep wild waterbirds away from their flock. Please see the attached documents from MDAR with more details about how to protect your flock.

Community members are also encouraged to avoid unnecessary contact with birds if possible to prevent infection. Infections can happen if the virus gets into a person’s eyes, nose or mouth, or is inhaled.

If you see any signs of Avian Flu among your flock or in the community, please notify authorities right away.

- If the bird is domestic, please call MDAR Animal Health at 617-626-1795, or use the online [Poultry Disease Reporting Form](https://www.mass.gov/forms/poultry-disease-reporting-form) at <https://www.mass.gov/forms/poultry-disease-reporting-form>.
- If the bird is wild, please contact MDFG Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) at [www.mass.gov/reportbirds](https://www.mass.gov/reportbirds).

Thank you for working with us to prevent the spread of disease in our community.

Sincerely,  
Andrew H. Petty  
Director of Health  
Town of Marblehead