Guidance for Addressing Bird Flu

We are sharing with you information and resources from authoritative sources as a pass through. Please be advised that there will likely be updates and changes to direction as we move through spring migration. We recommend that Bird Towns connect independently for information and directives from their respective county departments of health, other Bonafide governmental and the medical authoritative sources for updates.

Birds can carry diseases such as Avian Influenza, aka Bird Flu, which are transmissible to other birds, wildlife and people. Appropriate care should be taken when handling dead/live birds or wildlife and cleaning bird feeders. Please consider using the appropriate precautions recommended by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, as outlined below and also from the PA Game Commission.

Report sick or dead wild birds to the PA Game Commission by calling 1-833-PGC-WILD (742-9453)

Key safety tips for addressing Bird Flu:

1. Avoid Close Contact with Birds. While it's tempting to get up close for better viewing or photography, try to keep a safe distance from wild birds, particularly waterfowl, shorebirds, and poultry. Avoid touching birds, their droppings, or nests.

2. Wear Protective Gear. If you're handling birds in a rehabilitation setting or are exposed to bird droppings, wear protective gloves, masks, and clothing to help minimize risk. After handling birds or cleaning bird feeders, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water.

3. Keep Bird Feeders Clean and Sanitized. Bird flu can be spread through contaminated bird feeders. Make sure to clean your bird feeders regularly by scrubbing off debris and then soaking them for 10 minutes in a diluted bath using a solution of 10% bleach to water to kill any viruses. Rinse the feeder thoroughly with hot water and allow to dry before refilling.

4. Stay Informed. Check with local health authorities for updates on bird flu outbreaks in your area. If you live in a region where an outbreak has been reported, consider temporarily suspending birdwatching activities, especially in areas where infected birds are known to reside.

5. Avoid Sick Birds. If you notice a sick or dead bird, it's important not to touch it. In the event you encounter a dead bird, report it to local wildlife authorities. They can assess whether it may have been infected with bird flu.

6. It's Worth Repeating: Practice Good Hygiene. If you've been in contact with areas where birds and wildlife are present, always wash your hands with hot, soapy water and disinfect any gear or equipment you've used.

Reference for the information above:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/avian-influenza-outbreak-should-you-take-down-your-bird-feeders/

The status of Bird Flu can change quickly so for more information please visit the PA Game Commission website:

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pgc/wildlife/wildlife-health/wildlife-diseases/avian-influenza.html