

New host species for avian influenza identified

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An eight-year surveillance study, which included more than 36,000 wild migratory birds tested for low pathogenic avian influenza, details new data on host species, prevalence, and temporal and geographical variation of avian influenza in wild migratory birds in Europe.

In a new study published online in the open-access journal *PLoS Pathogens*, Dr. Vincent J. Munster, of Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, and colleagues identify new host species for avian influenza A virus (H5N1) and provide important information on the distinctions between the ecology and epidemiology of various global strains of the virus.

An eight-year surveillance study, which included more than 36,000 wild migratory birds tested for low pathogenic avian influenza, details new data on host species, prevalence, and temporal and geographical variation of avian influenza in wild migratory birds in Europe. Seven previously unknown host species for H5N1 were identified, including four species of goose and the common gull, and dabbling ducks were found to harbor all but two known influenza virus subtypes.

The ecological and epidemiological data provided on influenza A virus should assist both in assessing the risk of the virus spread by wild birds and with the design of new surveillance studies for high and low pathogenic avian influenza in migratory birds.

Source: Public Library of Science

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