

Avian Influenza Principal Investigators Meeting

Meeting Summary

February 6-7, 2008

USFWS Regional Office

MEETING GOAL: To facilitate a comprehensive AI sampling effort for the 2008 field season

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Review previous (2006 and 2007) sampling regimes and AI results
- 2) Identify data gaps and focal areas with regards to species, geographic distribution and live vs harvested samples
- 3) Decide upon sample collection techniques for 2008
- 4) Review data access and reporting policies
- 5) Discuss interagency/international collaboration
- 6) Provide morbidity/mortality response training to FWS response team members

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

TARGET SAMPLE NUMBER:

- Alaska has been allocated 12,500 (birds) samples from NWHC.
- Current breakdown from NWHC is
 - 9,000 Live
 - 3,000 Subsistence
 - 500 Hunter
- However, we have control over the allocations among sampling types.

SAMPLING METHODS (2008):

- We will collect both OP and Cloacal samples separately: (No change from 2007)
- *In 2008, Focus Remains on Cloacal and OP Samples from Live and Hunter Harvested Birds*
- A limited amount of fecal sampling from live birds will be conducted in 2008 (See attached Appendix A): (Change from 2007)
- Target sample size remains at n = 200

PRIORITY SPECIES AND RANKING CRITERIA (2008):

- An interagency subcommittee will meet to review the scoring on the 2006 ranking criteria for priority species
- Based on results from 2006/2007, a 6th criterion that includes exposure of LPAI will be included in the re-ranking
- Additional species were identified as possible additions to the priority list:

MALL	HOPU	COMU
GWTE	NOSH	BLKI
CAGO	GLWG	TBMU
GWFG	LESC	TUPU
GYRF	HADU	

EARLY LIVE BIRD SAMPLING:

- Early subsistence harvested birds can show higher prevalence of AI than birds of similar species sampled later in the year, so an earlier collection of live birds was discussed. Due to logistics it was unclear how many camps could be set out earlier.
- USGS-ASC can likely collect earlier samples of some geese species because their will be early season field camps set up. Therefore, we will collect earlier samples at these camps as a pilot study.

DATA POLICIES

- Similar to 2006 and 2007, AI results from individual projects will not be distributed until the annual interagency report is complete. If a principal investigator has questions about a specific batch during the field season, they may contact Yvette or Kim directly.

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH NEEDS (HIGH PRIORITY)

- Manuscript: Comparison of oral-pharyngeal, cloacal, and pooled samples for incidence and subtypes of influenza A viruses within a species and across taxa. Lead: NWHC; Support: ASC, USFWS Region 7, ADF&G
- Manuscript: Documenting Eurasian lineages of LPAI viruses in Alaska Migratory Birds. Lead: USGS-ASC
- Research Need: Comparing fecal and cloacal detection rates in birds experimentally challenged with AI. Lead: National Wildlife Health Center

Current DOI policy discourages large-scale environmental (e.g., fecal sampling) sampling. However, if it can be experimental demonstrated that cloacal and fecal sampling yields similar AI results, the surveillance program could be expanded to allow for remote sampling of birds that are difficult to catch. This project is relevant to Alaska and the National Surveillance program.

End Summary

APPENDIX A: FECAL SAMPLING POLICY IN ALASKA 2008:

DOI POLICY: NO LARGE-SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING (WATER OR FECAL)

The focus for the 2008 AI Surveillance Program is collecting cloacal and OP swabs from live and hunter harvested birds. However, in certain cases, it is not possible to capture an individual live bird, and it is not always possible to collect the target sample size of 200 from 'birds in hand'. Although, in these instances it is often possible to collect a fecal sample from a specific bird and fecal sampling may assist the PI in reaching their target sample number.

Therefore, under certain conditions, it may be necessary to use a fecal sample *in lieu of* a cloacal sample to meet the target sample size of 200 per group of sampled live birds.

In 2008, PIs will be allowed to collect fecal samples if the following conditions are met:*

- a) The study was designed as a live bird capture study
- b) A cloacal sample cannot be collected (i.e., live bird capture not successful or could not be attempted)
- c) Identity of bird is certain
- d) Sample is fresh

*Note there will be two pilot projects on shorebirds that will be collecting larger numbers of fecal samples. Conditions for these projects will slightly differ from those outlined above. (see Kim with questions)

Collection of Fecal Samples:

- 1) Shake off excess fecal material before sample is placed in AI media tube to avoid inhibiting VI.
- 2) Mark the vial with an "F" and the word "Fecal" if you use the 'Cloacal' marked vial from NWHC.