

## PROGRAM ACTIVITY REPORT (PAR)

*INCREASING KNOWLEDGE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA*

The USA Strategic Plan successfully developed and implemented the Wild Bird Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Early Detection System. Over the 5-year effort, State, Federal, and Tribal Agencies tested about 390,000 wild bird samples for avian influenza. This nationally coordinated system was a targeted, risk-based monitoring and surveillance program that systematically collected relevant ecological and avian influenza data on wild birds, efficiently assimilated data, and rapidly disseminated results to partner agencies, decision makers, and the public. This system capitalized on existing infrastructure and expertise at state and federal agriculture and natural resources agencies. The integrated, targeted approach used several parallel surveillance activities that provided statistically-based evidence on the absence of the HPAI viruses from the wild bird meta-community.

Standardized data collection protocols were developed to ensure the consistency and quality of samples collected. The NAHLN facilities were used to implement rapid

screening for H5 and H7 viruses, which were molecularly characterized and tested for pathogenicity by the NVSL. Partner agencies provided collection data to a common database (HEDDS), which was used to provide status updates to



Snow and Ross Geese being herded for influenza testing in Greenland.

the public and decision makers on the progress of the system in achieving annual sampling targets. Interagency cooperation and communication was maintained through the Steering Committee, ensuring consistency and reliability in data collection, processing, and reporting. Flexibility in the Early Detections System also was ensured by the Steering Committee, which periodically met to discuss recent advances in knowledge of HPAI H5N1 virology, detection,

and ecology. Proposed changes to the system were vetted through the Steering Committee and agreed upon by representative from the partner agencies. A publication reviewing this program (Deliberto et al. 2011) can be found on our website.

The data collected as part of this project continues to provide critical information on low pathogenic viruses in wild birds, as well insights on how such viruses move into poultry and other species, such as swine. The NWDP staff is working with partners in Veterinary Services, National Wildlife

Health Center, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a number of non-governmental organizations to use the data obtained from the Early Detection System to improve our ability to quantify and mitigate risk of influenza viruses moving from wild birds to other species.

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The original artwork on this page was created by the National Wildlife Disease Program's Erika Kampe and Sarah Goff