Avian influenza outbreak in West Africa

2 March 2021

In December 2020, an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) was reported in Thiès, 70 kilometres east of Dakar, Senegal.

In January 2021, a second outbreak of the same HPAI followed in the Parc National des Oiseaux du Djoudj, which is a Wetland of International Importance (Site no. 138 on the “Ramsar List”) and a UNESCO World Heritage Property, to the south-east of the Senegal River.

In response, the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds, which includes the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, convened to share information and provide guidance on how to handle the outbreak. The Task Force issued a statement with guidance and useful links on HPAI and wild birds. The statement is available here.

The Task Force anticipates identifying the circumstances that led to the outbreak in the region, and coordinated action to manage current and future epidemics across Djoudj and nearby National Parks such as Diawling (Ramsar Site no. 666) and Banc d’Arguin (Site no. 250) in Mauritania.