



California Waterfowl Association
4630 Northgate Blvd., Suite 150
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 648-1406
www.calwaterfowl.org

Contact: Dan Loughman (916) 648-1406
dan_loughman@calwaterfowl.org
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 22nd, 2006

Fall Migrant Pintails the Target Species for Avian Flu Monitoring

Although August has come and gone, it was an important month in California as it marked the early arrival of migrating northern pintails from Alaska. California biologists were focused on this early influx of pintail as it provided a prime opportunity for researchers to test for the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (H5N1).

California pintails were one of several target species being sampled for the virus. The significance of these early migrants to the Central Valley is the fact that they arrived from the breeding grounds of Alaska, which lies very close to Asia. Alaska is the cross over point where Asian and North American waterfowl mingle during the breeding season. The greatest probability to transfer the H5N1 virus to North America's waterfowl is during this time.

Beginning in September, a cooperative effort between the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)/ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), US Geological Survey (USGS) US Department of Agriculture (USDA), University California, Davis and the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) began working to trap and sample northern pintails in order to detect the much talked about virus. The combined agency effort successfully trapped and sampled 1,668 northern pintails throughout California, from the Klamath Basin south into the Tulare Basin. **Results indicated NO samples had tested positive for the H5N1 virus.**

Efforts to sample northern pintail were not only performed in California, but had also been conducted throughout the Lower 48 states and Alaska. This process of testing includes the sampling of live trapped birds, hunter shot birds and mortality birds (those birds found dead). To date, over 35,220 birds have been sampled with no indication the virus had spread into North America via bird migration. Testing is ongoing in an effort to monitor for the virus.

Some information listed above was found on the NBII web site. For further information and updates on avian flu testing, the following link can provide more information <http://wildlifedisease.nbio.gov/ai/index.jsp>.

###