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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Russia sets new Mariupol ultimatum in 'Battle of Donbas' as West pledges more help

KYIV/KHARKIV, April 19 (Reuters) - Russia was intensifying its attack on Ukraine's east on Tuesday as it seized a frontline city and sought a decisive victory in Mariupol, prompting Western governments to pledge more arms and sanctions.

Thousands of Russian troops backed by artillery and rocket barrages were advancing in what Ukrainian officials called the Battle of the Donbas.

Russia's nearly eight-week-long invasion has taken longer than many expected while still failing to capture any of the biggest cities, forcing Moscow to refocus in and around separatist regions.

The biggest attack on a European state since 1945 has, however, seen nearly 5 million people flee abroad and reduced cities to rubble as the incursion drags on.

Russia was hitting the Azovstal steel plant, the main remaining stronghold in Mariupol, with bunker-buster bombs, a Ukrainian presidential adviser said late on Tuesday. Reuters could not verify the details.

"The world watches the murder of children online and remains silent," adviser Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter.

After an earlier ultimatum to surrender lapsed and as midnight approached, Russia's defence ministry said not a single Ukrainian soldier had laid down their weapons and renewed the proposal. Ukrainian commanders at Azovstal have vowed not to surrender.

"Russia's armed forces, based purely on humanitarian principles, again propose that the fighters of nationalist battalions and foreign mercenaries cease their military operations from 1400 Moscow time on 20th April and lay down arms," the Russian Defence Ministry said.

The United States, Canada, Britain, France and Germany pledged more support to Ukraine.

"We will continue to provide them more ammunition, as we will provide them more military assistance," White House spokesperson Jen Psaki said, adding that new sanctions were being prepared.

"It is unfair that Ukraine still has to ask for (weapons) which have been sitting for years in the storage depots of our partners" President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in a video address.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a four-day humanitarian pause in the fighting this coming weekend, when Orthodox Christians



celebrate Easter, to allow civilians to escape and humanitarian aid to be delivered.

Russia says it launched what it calls a "special military operation" on Feb. 24 to demilitarise and "denazify" Ukraine. Kyiv and its Western allies reject that as a false pretext.

### CITY CAPTURED

Ukraine said the new assault had resulted in the capture of Kreminna, an administrative centre of 18,000 people in Luhansk, one of the two Donbas provinces.

Russian forces were attacking "on all sides", authorities were trying to evacuate civilians and it was impossible to tally the civilian dead, Luhansk regional governor Serhiy Gaidai said.

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov confirmed that "another stage of this operation is beginning. Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia was "methodically" carrying out its plan to "liberate" Donetsk and Luhansk, provinces which Moscow demands Kyiv cede fully to Russian-backed separatists.

Driven back by Ukrainian forces in March from an assault on Kyiv in the north, Russia has instead poured troops into the east for the Donbas offensive.

It has also made long-distance strikes at other targets including the capital.

Ukraine's top security official, Oleksiy Danilov, said Russian forces had tried to break through Ukrainian defences "along almost the entire front line of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv regions".

The coal- and steel-producing Donbas has been the focal point of Russia's campaign to destabilise Ukraine since 2014, when the Kremlin used proxies to set up separatist "people's republics" in parts of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces.

Moscow now says its aim is to capture the full provinces on the separatists' behalf. Ukraine has a large force defending northern parts of the Donbas and military experts say Russia aims to cut them off or surround them.

But Russia still needs to keep its troops supplied across miles of hostile territory. Ukraine has counter-attacked near Kharkiv in the rear of Russia's advance, apparently aiming to cut off supply lines.

### SHELL-SHOCKED RESIDENTS

In Mariupol, scene of the war's heaviest fighting and worst humanitarian catastrophe, about 120 civilians living next to the sprawling steel plant left via humanitarian corridors, the Interfax news agency reported on Tuesday, quoting Russian

state TV.

Mariupol has been besieged since the war's early days. Tens of thousands of residents have been trapped with no access to food or water and bodies litter the streets. Ukraine believes more than 20,000 civilians have died there.

Russia has denied targeting civilians in its invasion of Ukraine and says, without evidence, that signs of atrocities were staged.

Capturing Mariupol would link pro-Russian separatist territory with the Crimea region that Moscow annexed in 2014.

In Russian-held districts reached by Reuters, shell-shocked residents cooked on open fires outside their damaged homes.

"Obviously, against the backdrop of the Mariupol tragedy, the negotiation process has become even more complicated," Podolyak told Reuters.

Kyiv and Moscow have not held face-to-face talks since March 29. Each side blames the other for their breakdown.

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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

04/19/2022

## New York Apple Store Tries To Unionize

Some workers in New York City's Central Park Apple store are seeking to form a union to seek better pay and benefits. Some of the employees have begun collecting signatures to file a petition to unionize. If 30% of them agree, according to the National Labor Relations Board, they can hold the election.

Workers United, an affiliate of the Service

Employees International Union, also was successful in organizing a union effort for Starbucks.

Some workers said a union is needed because wages have not kept pace with the cost of living in New York City. They also want better job protection.

Today 40% of government workers belong to a union. Only



6.1% of private sector employees are union members. Memberships have been falling steadily from the 16.8% level in 1983.

Apple is currently the most valuable and largest enterprise in the world. Employees believe that Apple earns big money and can afford more benefits for them.

For a long time in New York City, San Francisco

and Los Angeles there have been very strong unions locally. Because the epidemic has affected so many small businesses over the last two years and with rising inflation and higher interest rates hurting more business owners, we urge the government to pay more attention to small businesses. Their survival is key. Unionizing will really hurt them in the long run.



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## Editor's Choice



Ukrainian servicemen ride atop an armored fighting vehicle at an unknown location in eastern Ukraine, in this picture released April 19. Press service of the Ukrainian Ground Forces/via REUTERS



Smoke rises above Azovstal steelworks, in Mariupol, Ukraine, in this still image obtained from a recent drone video posted on social media. Mariupol City Council/via REUTERS



A woman pulls a wheel chair while transporting an injured man in a street in the southern port city of Mariupol, Ukraine, April 18. REUTERS/Alexander Ermochenko



A Ukrainian serviceman rides atop an armored fighting vehicle at an unknown location in eastern Ukraine, in a picture released April 19. Press service of the Ukrainian Ground Forces/via REUTERS



Ukrainian children take part in a therapy session with a therapeutic dog, in a complex set up as a shelter organised by volunteers, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine. REUTERS/Ueslei Marcelino



People salvage their belongings from a house damaged by an earthquake in Lumajang, East Java province, Indonesia, April 11, 2021. Antara Foto/Zabur Karuru

**Egg Prices Have Nearly Tripled Since November**

**Fast-Spreading Bird Flu May Be Here To Stay**

**Avian Flu Has Spread To 30 States, Sharply Driving Up Egg Prices**

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



A newly arrived bird flu is sweeping through wild bird populations in the United States, and that may mean trouble for poultry farmers who have been doing their best to control this flu outbreak in their flocks.

Approximately 24 million poultry birds including chickens and turkeys have already been lost, either because they died from the virus or were killed to prevent its spread. But unlike a similar bird flu outbreak seven years ago, this one is unlikely to just burn itself out.

This is because this particular flu virus seems capable of hanging around in populations of wild birds, which can pass the virus on to poultry farms. While chickens and turkeys with the virus quickly sicken and die, some waterfowl can remain healthy with the virus and carry it long distances.

Scientists believe that wild migratory birds brought this virus to North America a few months ago. Since then, more than 40 wild bird species in more than 30 states have tested positive. This strain of bird flu virus has turned up in everything from crows to pelicans to bald eagles.

"It's somewhat surprising how widespread it is already in North America," says Jonathan Runstadler, an influenza researcher at Tufts University. "It's clearly able to persist and transmit from year to year in parts of Asia, Europe, Africa, and I don't think we should be surprised if that's going to be the case here."

**H5N1 Bird Flu Detections Across The United States (Backyard And Commercial)**  
Updated April 15, 2022

**Summary**  
**Birds Affected**  
**27,016,123**  
**Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5)**

viruses have been detected in U.S. wild aquatic birds, commercial poultry and backyard or hobbyist flocks beginning in January 2022. These are the first detections of HPAI A(H5) viruses in the U.S. since 2016. Preliminary genetic sequencing and RT-PCR testing on some virus specimens shows these viruses are HPAI A(H5N1) viruses from clade 2.3.4.4.

As the virus moves across the country, and potentially settles in for the long haul, it will encounter new animal species that could get infected. This pathogen will also get a chance to genetically mingle with the flu viruses that are already circulating in the U.S.

"What that means for the virus in terms of how it evolves, how it changes, we just don't really know," says Richard Webby, a flu researcher at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

**There has been only one known human case** So far, the risk to humans seems low.

But since related bird flu viruses have repeatedly jumped into people in the past, public health experts are watching for any signs of genetic changes that could make the virus able to move into humans.

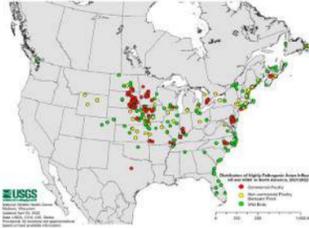
"We're concerned with any avian influenza virus that's circulating in domestic poultry or wild birds," says Todd Davis, an expert on animal-to-human diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Because humans have no prior immunity to these viruses typically, if they were to be infected and spread the virus to other humans, then we could have another pandemic virus on our hands."

This virus doesn't have genetic features previously associated with related bird flus that have infected humans. And the only person known to have contracted this particular bird flu virus was an elderly

person in the United Kingdom who lived in close quarters with ducks; while some of the ducks got sick and died, their owner never had any symptoms. The CDC has been monitoring the health of more than 500 people in 25 states who were exposed to infected birds, says Davis. Although a few dozen people did develop flu-like symptoms, all were tested and none were positive for this virus.

**Raptors could be especially hard hit** Wildlife experts have long known that highly pathogenic bird flu like this one were circulating in Europe and Asia. And they have worried about the possible threat these viruses might pose to American birds.

Then, in December of 2021, chickens and other fowl got sick and started dying on a farm on the island of Newfoundland, Canada. Tests showed this deadly bird flu virus had made it across the Atlantic.



"The very first moment it got to North America, it was a heads up to us," says Bryan Richards, the emerging diseases coordinator at the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center.

In January, government officials announced its arrival in the U.S. after a wigeon duck in South Carolina tested positive. The last time a dangerous bird flu entered the country, Richards says, "the number of instances where we picked that particular virus up in wild birds was very, very limited."

In contrast, this latest bird flu virus is being detected in sick and dying birds all over.

"This outbreak in the wild bird population is a lot more extensive than we saw in 2014 and 2015," says David Stallknecht, an avian influenza researcher with the University of Georgia. "Just a lot more birds appear to be affected."

Waterfowl, and raptors that eat their dead bodies, are bearing the brunt of it.

In Florida, for example, more than 1,000 lesser scaup ducks have succumbed to the virus. In New Hampshire, about 50 Canada geese died in a single event. In the Great Plains states, wildlife experts have seen mass die-offs in snow geese.

"In addition, there's a host of other species, including black vultures and bald eagles and some of the other scavenging species, that were likely infected by consuming the carcasses of those waterfowl," says Richards.

It remains to be seen how much of a toll this virus will take on American bird species.

In Israel, when this virus hit an area where about 40,000 common cranes had gathered for the winter, "they lost a reported 8,000 of these birds over the course of a couple weeks," says Richards. "So when you start thinking about losing 20% of a specific population of wild birds, that's a pretty substantial impact."

**Poultry farmers cull their flocks**

Chickens and turkeys raised by the poultry industry have suffered the most deaths, and farmers are bracing themselves for even more. The bird flu that struck in 2014 and 2015 resulted in the deaths of more than 50 million birds and cost the industry billions of dollars. Back then, the greatest number of cases occurred in the month of April.



"So I think I am kind of holding my breath this month," says Denise Heard, director of research programs for the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association. The virus has a number of ways to get from wild birds into poultry, says Heard. Since the last outbreak, the industry has worked to educate farmers about how to protect their flocks.

"Wild migratory waterfowl are always flying over the top and when they poop, that poop gets on the ground," she says, explaining that the virus can then get tracked into bird houses on boots or inadvertently moved from farm to farm on vehicles.

Heard says there currently seems to be less spread of the virus from farm to farm than was seen during the last major outbreak. Instead, there are more isolated cases popping up, perhaps because wild birds are bringing the viruses to farms and backyard flocks.

If this virus sticks around in wild bird populations — which some scientists think is likely — poultry farmers may need to just learn to live with this problem.

"I hope that this is not the case. I hope that in the U.S. this infection will die off soon, and the virus will go away again like it did in 2014," says Ron Fouchier, a virologist at Erasmus Medical Center in the Netherlands.

"But there's no guarantee for that, as we've seen in Europe now that this virus has remained present for several years in a row."

Since December, farmers in Europe have had to cull more than 17 million birds. "So that's very similar to the situation in the U.S.," says Fouchier. "And we are seeing massive die-offs in wild birds."

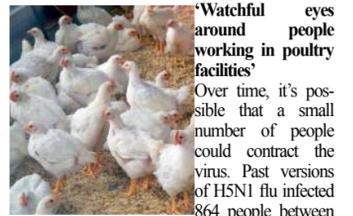


This week alone, the strain, known as H5N1, likely killed hundreds of birds at a lake northwest of Chicago, and at least three bald eagles in Georgia. Two cases of H5N1 were also found in birds at U.S. zoos.

Since January, the USDA has detected H5N1 among tens of millions of wild birds and domestic and commercial flocks, predominantly in the South, Midwest and the East Coast. Nearly 27 million chickens and turkeys have been killed to prevent the virus's spread.

So far, no cases have been reported among people in the U.S., and the risk to public health is low, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Just one recent human infection has been documented: a person in England who raised birds got sick. That case, reported in January, was asymptomatic.

But the bird flu outbreak is affecting consumers' lives in the form of rising egg and poultry prices. The average weekly price for large eggs is up 44 percent compared with this time last year, the USDA reported Monday. Wholesale poultry prices rose 4 percent in February, and the USDA predicts they could climb between 9 and 12 percent in 2022.



2003 and 2021, according to the World Health Organization. About half of those cases were fatal. "Sporadic human infections with current H5N1 bird flu viruses would not be surprising, especially among people with exposures who may not be taking recommended precautions," the CDC says on its website.

But Andrew Bowman, an associate professor at Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, said he'd be surprised to see this particular bird flu spill over into people on a large scale. Ancestors of this virus have been circulating in other parts of the world for a while, he said, and people have been relatively spared.

"The current lineage we're seeing is really not fit to go into mammalian hosts, so it's got to be pretty unlikely," Bowman said.

If a person does get infected, disease experts should be able to quickly test them, he added.

"We have a lot of watchful eyes around people working in poultry facilities, especially if they're involved in a flock that becomes infected," Bowman said. (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org/> and [nbcnews.com](https://www.nbcnews.com/))

(Article Continues Below)

(Article Continues From Above)

**Avian Flu Has Spread To 30 States, Sharply Driving Up Egg Prices**

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



**What We Know Now About The Deadliest U.S. Bird Flu Outbreak In Seven Years**



The price of eggs has risen sharply since the start of a bird flu outbreak that has resulted in millions of birds being culled. (Photo/Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

A highly pathogenic bird flu virus is tearing its way through U.S. farms and chicken yards, spreading to at least 24 states less than two months after the first outbreak was reported in a commercial flock. Nearly 23 million birds have died. It's the worst U.S. outbreak of the avian flu since 2015, when more than 50 million birds died. The outbreak is driving up consumer prices for eggs and chicken meat that, like many costs, had already been rising due to inflation.

Here's what you need to know about the outbreak. **22,851,072 birds have been wiped out**

Some birds have died from the disease itself, but the vast majority are being culled to try to stop the deadly and highly infectious virus from spreading. That includes millions of chickens and turkeys in barns and backyards that had been raised to provide eggs or meat.

One of the worst-hit states is Iowa, where more

than 5 million birds died at an egg-laying facility in Osceola on March 31, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Overall, more than 13 million birds have been culled in the state. As of around noon ET on Tuesday, 72 commercial flocks and 46 backyard flocks were reported to be infected around the country.



**A bald eagle perches on a branch in Milpitas, Calif., on Mar. 12.** (Photo/Liu Guanguan / China News Service via Getty Images file) **The bird flu poses only a low risk to humans, the CDC says**

It's rare for a human to become infected with the avian virus. No human infections of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), which includes the H5N1 bird flu virus, have ever been reported in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The virus does not pose a special risk in the nation's food supply, either, the CDC states that like any poultry or eggs, proper handling and heating food to an internal temperature of 165°F kills any bacteria and viruses present — including any HPAI viruses. There have been only four human infections of

low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) viruses ever in the U.S., the CDC says, noting that those cases resulted in only mild or moderate illness.

**The virus was first reported in wild birds**

The first U.S. warning of the new outbreak came on Jan. 13, when the USDA announced a strain of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus had been found in wild birds for the first time since 2016. Many of those first cases were in South Carolina and North Carolina, in birds killed by hunters.



The cases then spread north as wild birds migrated and spread the virus to farms. On Feb. 9, an outbreak was confirmed at a commercial turkey flock in Dubois County, Ind.

Ben Slinger, whose family raises turkeys for a meat processor, recently told Iowa Public Radio that he's taking precautions to protect his flocks from infection, after they had to cull tens of thousands of birds in 2015. In addition to using disinfectant, workers wear separate pairs of boots for each barn.

"We know what the aftermath of that is like, and it is pretty disheartening," Slinger said. Known cases now range from Maine to Texas, where the virus was found in a commercial pheasant flock in Erath County on Sunday.

**Grocery prices for chicken are rising**

For the current week, the average U.S. price of chicken breasts rose to \$3.93 per pound at major supermarkets — sharply higher than last week's \$3.14 price. A year ago, the price was \$2.48, the Agriculture Department says.

Egg prices have also gone up compared to 2021, and breast tenders cost a full dollar more now than they did a year ago, according to the USDA.

"Prices for white parts are on the rise" with a few exceptions, the department said. "The cost for dark meat items are also increasing; bulk pack drumsticks, thighs, and leg quarters take up most of the spotlight."



**Land is prepared for the disposal of nearly 3 million chickens after avian influenza was recently discovered at a commercial egg opera-**

tion near Palmyra, Wis. (Photo Scott Olson/Getty Images)

**The last outbreak lasted about 6 months**

The bird flu outbreak that peaked in the late spring of 2015 was "the largest poultry health disaster in U.S. history," the USDA says. Many of those infections were reported in Iowa and neighboring states near "the intersection of the Central and Mississippi flyways used by wild birds during seasonal migration," the agency said. That's the same region that's now being hit hard by the virus.

In the 2015 outbreak, fomites — objects that can transfer disease — were seen as a key source of viral transmission. Such items include the boots and clothing of poultry industry employees and vehicles used to spread feed. Officials also pointed to the dense concentration of some production facilities as a source of case clusters.

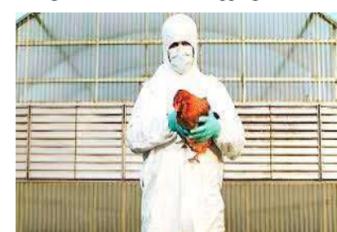
The 2015 outbreak tapered sharply and ended in June of that year — but 3 million birds still died in that final month. Because of the lingering effect on the supply chain, it wasn't until several more months later that some poultry prices peaked and then normalized, according to the USDA.

**The history and spread of H5N1**

Ancestors of the current H5N1 bird flu were first detected in geese in China in 1996. The current set of H5N1 bird flu viruses was identified in Europe in 2020, then found in North and South Carolina in January.

The recent U.S. outbreak is the worst since 2015, when multiple bird flu strains, including some H5N1 viruses, spread across the country. Nearly 50 million birds were slaughtered or died. Bowman said this new outbreak appears to be even more geographically widespread.

Experts attribute the spread of H5N1 to the migration of wild birds, which pass the virus through saliva, mucus and droppings.



The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota recently recommended in a Facebook post that people to stop using bird feeders or bird baths to stop birds from congregating. But experts said songbirds aren't the main drivers of the spread.

"There's 10,000 species of birds and (the virus) doesn't infect them all the same," Bowman said. "For the primary transmission, we're really focusing on the waterfowl, especially the dabbling ducks."

Buckles said it's important to keep chickens and

turkeys away from wild birds to prevent the virus from entering our food supply. As a precaution, people should cook poultry and eggs to a temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the CDC.

If you've come into contact with a bird, wash your hands, Buckles added.

"Anytime that you have animals — I don't care whether it's your pet dog or your chicken — you need to practice good hand hygiene," she said. "We all know how wash for 20 seconds with soap and water. That applies to this as well." (Courtesy npr.org)

**Related**  
**The United States is seeing its largest outbreak of Avian Influenza since 2015.**

**Who's Most At Risk For The Latest U.S. Bird Flu Outbreak?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said the good news with this outbreak is that human transmission is low. It hasn't reported any cases of serious illness. ABC10 Health Expert Dr. Payal Kohli said previous versions had a more easily mutated virus that could spread from one host to another. Typically humans that come into close contact with livestock or poultry are the most like likely to catch it.



"For the average person that doesn't handle livestock, this is not a big threat in my mind right now. If it does end up being reported in humans, that will change entirely, and then I think we have to be very careful because we know from previous experience that previous versions of the bird flu can actually cause more severe illness and can be more virulent in humans," Kohli said.

The CDC said in order to protect themselves, people should observe all wild birds from a distance. Birds can be infected even if they don't look sick. The CDC also recommends staying away from surfaces that could be contaminated with the feces of a wild or domestic bird.

For more information on Bird Flu, visit the CDC website here: (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>). (Courtesy abc10.com)