

Avian Influenza Surveillance in Central Asia: A Possible Reporting Gap for Uzbekistan Relative to Kazakhstan

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Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b has been repeatedly reported in Central Asia. WOAHA data show 27 outbreaks in Kazakhstan during 2005-2023 (20 poultry, 7 wildlife), plus detections in southern Siberia. Uzbekistan lies on the same Central Asian flyway, linking Siberian breeding areas with South/Southwest Asian wintering grounds, where wild bird migration and duck density have been linked to HPAI risk. Despite comparable exposure, our structured English-language search of WOAHA/WAHIS, FAO EMPRES-i, WHO risk assessments, and peer-reviewed literature found no comparable dataset for Uzbekistan - an absence that may reflect limited indexing, language barriers, or a true surveillance gap.

Objective: To characterise the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan reporting asymmetry along the shared flyway and its implications for regional HPAI surveillance.

Methods: Structured review of WOAHA/WAHIS, FAO EMPRES-i, WHO risk assessments, and peer-reviewed English-language literature, cross-checked against regional surveillance reviews.

Findings: Kazakhstan has publicly accessible documentation of 27 outbreaks; no equivalent Uzbekistan dataset was identified. Evidence cannot yet distinguish under-ascertainment, limited data accessibility, and a true surveillance gap.

Conclusion: Improving access to national surveillance data and strengthening cross-border collaboration within a One Health framework would support fuller assessment of HPAI circulation along this flyway.

Keywords

Avian influenza (H5N1); Central Asian flyway; Uzbekistan; Kazakhstan; Surveillance gap; One Health

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Yes, I am a junior scientist.

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