



H5N1 Bird Flu and Demoiselle Cranes

Source: [DTE](#)

Migratory Demoiselle cranes in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, face threats from the spreading [H5N1 bird flu](#), compounded by **unusually high rainfall creating toxic water bodies** and **pesticide spraying** on chickpea fields.

- **H5N1: Avian Influenza A (H5N1) or H5N1 Bird Flu** is a highly pathogenic virus primarily affecting **birds but can also infect mammals**.
 - It originated in **China in 1996** and rapidly evolved into a more dangerous strain.
 - Since 2020, it has spread globally across continents. **India first encountered an H5N1 outbreak in 2015**, affecting Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- **Spread to Humans:** Close contact with infected birds or contaminated environments is the primary route of human infection of **avian influenza A viruses**. Person-to-person transmission is rare but possible.
- **Demoiselle Cranes:** The Demoiselle crane (known as the **koonj or kurjan** in India), native to **Russia's Siberian region**, migrates to India during winters to escape extreme cold, particularly to Rajasthan.
 - **Conservation:** [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Status](#) (Least Concern) and Khichan (in Rajasthan) hosts **India's first Demoiselle crane reserve, hosts 20,000-30,000 cranes each winter**.



Read more: [H5N1 Bird Flu](#)