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ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE OF AVIAN INFLUENZA VIRUS IN WILD ANIMALS OF BRAZILIAN COAST, 2024

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The highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 virus was first introduced in Brazil in 2023 from South American countries by wild birds. The PREVIR-MCTI network characterized the virus detected in wild birds and mammals in Brazil through collaboration with the Santos Basin Beach Monitoring Project (PMP/BS) group of Santa Catarina and researchers from Brazilian Institutions. Seven-hundred and seven wildlife samples (swab and carcass) were collected from January to August 2024 in Santa Catarina (n=248), São Paulo (n=191), Espírito Santo (n=169), and Bahia (n=99) states. Samples were collected from healthy and rehabilitation animals, and carcasses in fourteen orders as follows: Charadriiformes (20.8%), Passeriformes (18.7%), Anseriformes (17.7%), Suliformes (13.6%), Sphenisciformes (11.3%), Columbiformes (6.3%), Phaethontiformes (5.6%), and Carnivora, Pelecaniformes, Caprimulgiformes, Coraciiformes, Cuculiformes, Gruiformes, Hirundinidae (below 1% each). Carcass samples of two seagulls and one sea lion found with an unknown cause were collected on the Northern coast of Santa Catarina from February to May. Nevertheless, all samples were tested negative for the RT-qPCR specific to the avian influenza virus. Next-generation sequencing analysis will be conducted in carcasses samples to identify the pathogen that might cause any infection. The data suggest a decline in HPAI in wildlife from the Brazilian coast during the first semester of 2024 despite the continuous outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 worldwide.

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