

# What is H5 bird flu?

High pathogenicity H5N1 avian influenza (H5 bird flu) is currently impacting all parts of the world and has caused severe disease and high death rates in poultry, wild birds and affected mammals.

H5 bird flu has been confirmed in wild birds across Australia, including NSW. Visit [birdflu.gov.au](http://birdflu.gov.au) for the current situation.

It's important that we all continue to remain vigilant and report any sick or dead poultry, wild birds or wildlife.

As a bird owner, you can help protect your birds and others by staying alert:

- Watch for signs of illness such as sudden death, breathing problems, swelling, or changes in behaviour.
- Avoid contact with wild birds, especially if they appear sick or dead.
- Keep your birds enclosed and away from areas where wild birds gather.
- Report any unusual illness or deaths in your birds to your vet or call the **Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline on 1800 675 888** (available 24/7).



**Early detection and reporting is essential to reduce the potential impact of this disease.**



## Requirements for all poultry and captive bird keepers

- ✓ Poultry and captive birds should be kept housed, if possible.
- ✓ If birds cannot be housed, netting should be used to prevent contact between your birds and other wild or free roaming birds.
- ✓ Inspect outdoor areas, removing wild bird contaminants like faeces, feathers and wild bird carcasses using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g., disposable rubber gloves, close-fitting face mask, glasses or goggles, washable clothing or disposable coveralls, clean rubber boots.
- ✓ Provide feed and water undercover to prevent wild bird access.
- ✓ Keep ducks and geese separate from other poultry.
- ✓ Store bedding under cover to reduce the risk of contamination.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect footwear before and after tending to your birds.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles to avoid disease spread between premises.
- ✓ Minimise the movement of people, vehicles and equipment to and from bird areas and keep records of movements.
- ✓ Keep records of poultry, captive bird and egg movements.
- ✓ Implement effective pest control.

**EMERGENCY ANIMAL  
DISEASE HOTLINE  
1800 675 888**

[dpird.nsw.gov.au/ai](http://dpird.nsw.gov.au/ai)



# Keep your birds safe



A serious strain of **H5N1 avian influenza** (H5 bird flu) has been confirmed in wild birds across Australia, including NSW.

Act now to protect your backyard poultry and kept birds and stay alert and report any sick or dead poultry, captive or wild birds.

## Know the signs:



**Birds with swelling around the head and neck.**



**Birds with nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing or difficulty breathing.**



**Purple discolouration of wattles, combs and legs.**



**Unexplained sudden death in birds.**



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# H5 bird flu: What to look out for

## Clinical signs of infection with H5 bird flu in birds include:

- Sudden death without clinical signs.
- Lethargy or reluctance to walk, eat or drink.
- Droopy appearance or ruffled feathers.
- Purple discolouration or bruising of the wattles, combs and legs.
- Respiratory signs such as panting, nasal discharge, coughing or sneezing.
- Swelling around the head and neck, incoordination, inability to walk or stand.
- Watery or green diarrhea.
- Sudden decrease in egg production.

## Human health

Although avian influenza viruses do not normally infect humans, some strains, including H5 bird flu, have been associated with disease in humans. The current risk of H5 bird flu to people in Australia is low.

Standard infection-control practices should always be implemented when handling animals, regardless of the perceived risk.

At a minimum, hygiene practices for hands, equipment, and facilities, along with careful management of animal and item movement between locations, should be followed during all interactions with animals.



## What you can do to avoid H5 bird flu

### Biosecurity tips for exhibitors, poultry and captive bird keepers:

- **Maintain cleanliness**
  - Clean sheds, yards, aviaries, and equipment with detergent, then disinfect with household bleach or a disinfectant that states it has activity against viruses, e.g., F10 or Virkon S.
- **Provide safe water**
  - Use clean, chlorinated domestic water
  - Keep birds away from natural water sources like streams and ponds.
- **Limit wild bird contact**
  - Place food and water inside shelters
  - Use fencing or netting for free-range birds.
- **Quarantine new birds**
  - Isolate new birds before adding them to your flock.
- **Control visitor access**
  - Limit visitors and check if they've been around other birds.
- **Avoid mixing at bird shows**
  - Prevent your birds from direct contact with other birds.
- **Practice good hygiene**
  - Wash hands before and after handling birds or eggs.
  - Farmers and bird keepers should wear clean clothes and footwear when entering enclosures.

## What to do if you suspect H5 bird flu

Look for signs of H5 bird flu and report any suspect cases in any species of animal. Early detection is key to minimising the impact of H5 bird flu.

If you see any unusual signs of disease, behaviour or unexplained death in your poultry or kept birds:

- **Avoid** contact with sick or dead birds or wildlife and their surroundings.
- **Record** what you observe.
- **Report** immediately. Contact the **Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline on 1800 675 888.**

Bird flu is a notifiable animal disease, which means you must, by law, report a suspect bird flu disease case or outbreak.

Visit the website for more information, OR scan the QR code to report anything unusual.



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