

# H5 Bird flu detection in Victoria - update

H5N1 high pathogenicity avian influenza (H5 bird flu) latest information as at 31 July 2026

## Current situation

H5 bird flu has been confirmed in Victoria for the first time.

The disease was confirmed in a single greater crested tern at Portland, southwest Victoria, on 30 July.

Genetic testing at CSIRO's Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) at Geelong has confirmed H5 bird flu.

There is also a further suspect case, a greater crested tern, also at Portland. Samples are undergoing confirmatory testing at the ACDP.

Cases of H5 bird flu, also known as H5 high pathogenicity avian influenza, have previously been confirmed in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales.

There are no detections in poultry in Australia and no signs of mass wildlife deaths.

There are currently no movement restrictions in place for poultry or birds in Victoria.

Overseas, this strain has caused severe disease and high death rates in poultry, wild birds and other wildlife. Human cases are rare and the virus does not spread easily between people.

This strain of bird flu is different from the H7 strains that were detected on Victorian poultry farms in 2020, 2024 and 2025. The H5 strain can infect a wide range of animals including wild birds and some mammals.

The current risk of bird flu to people in Australia is low. Bird flu is not a food safety risk for chicken meat and eggs if they are handled and cooked correctly.

If you see sick or dead birds or other wildlife, do not touch them.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), is the lead agency and will focus on limiting the impacts, where possible, to our most threatened species, supporting farmers and reducing the risk to domestic and commercial poultry.

Read the [media release announcing the detection](#).

## Reporting suspected cases

If you find sick or dead wild birds or wildlife with signs of H5 bird flu:

- AVOID contact with sick or dead wild birds or wildlife and their environment
- RECORD what you see
- REPORT, to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action [by using this form](#).
- or calling the Emergency Animal Disease hotline [1800 675 888](#) in line with the guidance below.

Report clusters (5 or more) of sick or dead wild birds of any species, anywhere in Victoria.

Report even one sick or dead:

- wild seabird, waterbird, shorebird or bird of prey (e.g. eagles, hawks)
- marine mammal (e.g. seal, sea lion, dolphin).

DEECA will assess each report and decide if testing is needed.

To report sick or dead livestock, commercial poultry or pet birds, please call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline immediately on [1800 675 888](#).

### **Be alert for signs of bird flu in birds or wild birds**

Signs of sickness in birds include

- sudden death
- lack of coordination, tremors
- swimming in circles
- twisted necks or other unusual posture
- inability to stand or fly
- diarrhoea
- difficulty breathing
- coughing or sneezing
- swelling around the head, neck and eyes
- cloudiness or change in colour of the eyes.

Infected poultry may have a rapid drop in feed and water intake and egg production.

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

Infected animals become ill quickly and can die from the effects of the virus within hours or days.

Although any bird species can become infected, bird groups associated with water are known to be highly susceptible. This includes shorebirds, waders such as ibis, waterfowl such as ducks, geese and swans and seabirds such as seagulls, terns and penguins.

Species living or breeding in large colonies are also particularly susceptible.

Predatory birds, predatory and scavenger mammals are also at risk due to eating infected animals.

## Poultry owners

Poultry owners are advised to maintain stringent biosecurity and take steps to protect their birds from the disease.

These steps include:

- Restrict contact between your birds and wild birds wherever you can.
- Prevent poultry from physically accessing surface water, dams and other water sources used by wild birds.
- Reduce access to higher-risk range areas, including reducing the area and duration of range access.
- Provide feed and water in the poultry shed.
- Prevent wildlife access to poultry feed and sheds.
- Effective water sanitation of water supply to poultry.
- Keep your poultry sheds, yards, aviaries and equipment clean.
- Effective use of barriers between outside and inside poultry housing including footbaths.
- Appropriate and safe disposal and composting of waste and packaging from poultry facilities.
- Only buy healthy birds from reputable suppliers and always quarantine new birds before introducing them to the existing flock.
- Limit any visitors to your birds, and ensuring a stand down period for visits between poultry premises.
- Use all-in/all-out management practices where possible, including cleaning and disinfecting sheds between batches or before introducing new stock. Implement rodent and pest animal control measures to reduce contamination risks.
- Reconsider the need to attend poultry shows if they are being held. Always practice good hygiene if you attend bird shows or poultry auctions.
- Always wash your hands before and after handling birds and eggs.
- Change into clean footwear before entering poultry houses or hen facilities, to stop the potential transfer of disease from outside.
- Keep good records of bird movements or sales.
- Monitor for signs of illness, production changes or unexplained mortality and immediately report suspected emergency animal disease.
- Consider housing free-range flocks where practical, while maintaining animal welfare.

By playing your part and following official advice, you are protecting Australia's poultry industry, farmer's livelihoods, our food supply and regional communities.

For more information about [biosecurity for backyard chickens](#) and [commercial poultry](#) visit the Agriculture Victoria website.

Further updates will be provided as the situation evolves.

## Key links

### Victoria

- Media release: [H5 bird flu detection in Western Australia](#) | [Media releases](#) | [Media centre](#) | [About](#) | [Agriculture Victoria](#)
- [Agriculture Victoria website](#) for advice for landholders and wildlife carers
- [Agriculture Victoria Facebook](#)
- Advice about [managing dead birds on your land](#)
- Advice about [backyard poultry](#).

### National

- [DAFF website](#)
- [Wildlife Health Australia](#)
- [Bird flu \(avian influenza\) | Australian Centre for Disease Control](#)