



Australian Government

# H5 bird flu information for First Nations communities

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This information has been developed to help inform local messaging, it can be adapted for use in your state or territory. If you see sick or dead birds or other animals, do not touch them.

**Avoid** contact.

**Record** what you see.

**Report** multiple sick or dead birds or other animals to the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline** on **1800 675 888** from anywhere in Australia.

You can also report sick or dead birds to Elders, local community or ranger groups.

Working together helps protect our communities and Country and supports our wildlife.

- Talk with Elders, rangers and community leaders about ways to keep H5 bird flu out of the community.
- Work together to identify risks and reduce the impacts on poultry and other birds.
- Share information with family and community members about the signs of H5 bird flu.
- Let local community leaders, local council, environmental health workers, rangers or other trusted local contacts know if you see sick or dead birds.

Staying informed and sharing information helps protect communities and Country and supports our wildlife.

## What is the risk of H5 bird flu to First Nations people?

The risk to people is low but people who hunt birds or other animals, collect eggs, handle wildlife, or come into contact with sick or dead birds should be extra careful. For more information visit [Australian Centre for Disease Control](#).

## What activities may increase the risk?

- handling sick or dead birds or animals
- hunting or harvesting animals that are dead or appear sick
- cutting up dead animals
- eating uncooked or bloody meat or eggs
- touching bird or animal droppings, feathers or contaminated equipment
- visiting or working in places where H5 bird flu is present
- allowing dogs to eat sick or dead animals.

## How to manage the risk

- wash your hands and utensils with soap and water after handling animals, eggs or raw meat
- thoroughly cook meat and eggs all the way through (no blood in cooked meat)
- avoid touching your face (nose, eyes or mouth)
- clean and disinfect equipment, vehicles and clothing.

## You can protect yourself, your family and Country by:

- avoiding contact with sick or dead birds or animals
- reporting unusual animal deaths
- following local biosecurity advice e.g. steps that help stop the disease spreading
- washing hands and cleaning equipment
- keeping dogs and cats away from, or eating, sick or dead birds or animals
- sharing trusted information with community members
- getting an annual flu vaccination to help reduce the risk of getting H5 bird flu and seasonal flu at the same time.

## What is the risk to traditional hunting and cultural practices?

There are risks to wildlife, including culturally significant species, totems and traditional practices. Overseas, H5 bird flu has caused a lot of deaths in wild birds and some mammals. If culturally important species are affected, communities may experience impacts to hunting, cultural harvesting, ceremony, knowledge sharing and caring for Country.

## What is the risk to Country?

H5 bird flu can affect the health of wildlife populations and may have flow-on effects for ecosystems, waterways and culturally significant sites. Sick or dead animals on Country can also affect community wellbeing and people's connections to Country.

## Are there risks to managing poultry in community?

H5 bird flu spreads easily and can infect backyard poultry and pet birds through:

- contact with infected wild birds or feral chickens
- contaminated clothing, shoes, equipment, egg cartons, or vehicles.

If you own backyard poultry or other birds, these simple steps will help protect them:

- keep equipment and enclosures clean
- prevent contact between your birds and wild birds
- keep food and water clean
- practice good hygiene
- limit visitor access to birds.

## Who is responsible for disposing of dead animals?

Check your local council or [state or territory government](#) website for more information about disposing of dead animals.



## First Nations information and support

The threat of H5 bird flu is concerning for First Nations communities as it may impact totems, culturally significant animals, and the health of Country.

If you're feeling worried, talk to someone you trust, like a health worker, ranger or community leader. Looking after each other and Country is something we can do together.

[13YARN](#) (13 92 76) is a culturally safe, free and confidential support service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Community members who are feeling distressed, worried or overwhelmed are encouraged to call **13 92 76** at any time, day or night.

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Contact the Department at [NBCEN@aff.gov.au](mailto:NBCEN@aff.gov.au)



### Find out more

Information and resources about H5 bird flu are available at **[birdflu.gov.au](http://birdflu.gov.au)**.

**Emergency Animal  
Disease hotline:**

**1800 675 888**