



Australian Government

Protecting priority native birds from H5 bird flu

September 2026



About our vaccination strategy

A targeted emergency vaccination strategy has been developed to help protect Australia's threatened and conservation-dependent bird populations at high risk from H5 avian influenza (H5 bird flu).

The strategy was informed by a series of trials and pilot studies that have assessed vaccine safety, immune responses and dose requirements in native bird species.

Vaccination currently focuses on supporting the protection of high-risk species in captivity as well as managed wild populations, where it can be delivered safely and effectively. For some species, the loss of even a small number of birds could affect recovery efforts.

Priority species for vaccination

Under the strategy, the species prioritised for vaccination are at high risk of H5 bird flu and play a critical role in supporting national recovery in the wild. These include:

- orange-bellied parrot
- regent honeyeater
- plains-wanderer
- western ground parrot
- bristlebird
- swift parrot.

A range of other species will also be included where vaccination is considered appropriate.

Species not included in the vaccination strategy

The targeted emergency vaccination strategy does not include:

- commercial or backyard poultry

- birds that have contact with poultry or poultry facilities
- birds kept for production, sale, racing or competition.

Privately-owned pet birds are not eligible for vaccination under the current strategy.

Important to know

- Australia's targeted emergency vaccination strategy to help protect priority native bird species against this strain of H5 bird flu is understood to be the largest of its kind undertaken anywhere in the world. However, broadscale vaccination of wild birds is not considered practical, feasible, or appropriate.
- Supporting healthy habitats and strong populations remains the best way of ensuring our native bird and mammal species withstand and recover from the impacts of H5 bird flu.

- The strategy provides a guiding framework for considering vaccination but does not mandate that any species or individual bird must be vaccinated.
- Vaccination decisions are made by state and territory Chief Veterinary Officers in partnership with relevant environment departments and operators of participating facilities based on local circumstances and risk assessments.
- The Australian Government manages vaccine permit holder conditions, including safety monitoring and reporting to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

Potential benefits of vaccination

Vaccination can provide a level of protection against H5 bird flu for individual birds and may help reduce severe disease.

The safety, effectiveness and duration of protection provided by the vaccine is likely to vary between species and remains uncertain for many non-poultry birds. This is particularly relevant for Australian species, many of which are unique.

Information gathered through vaccination activities will also help improve understanding of vaccine safety and effectiveness across a range of Australian native birds.

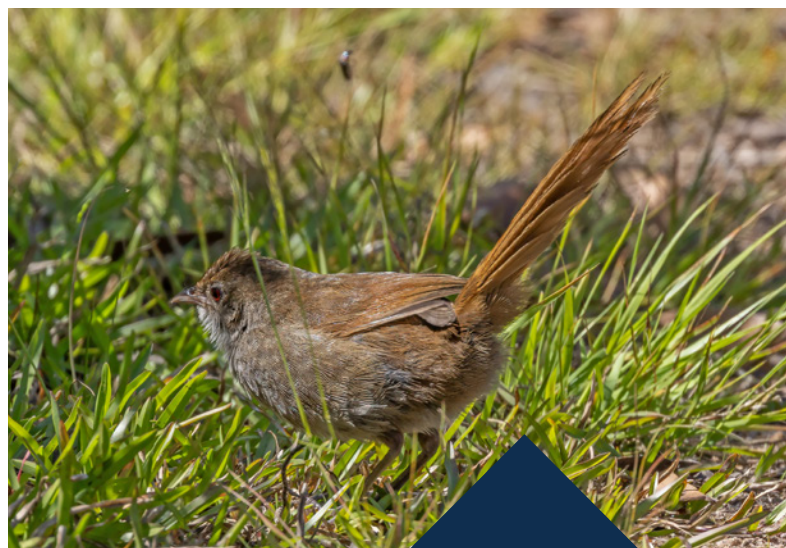
Limitations and considerations

While early trials and pilot studies have shown promising results in a number of native bird species, information on vaccine safety and ongoing effectiveness remains limited for many non-poultry species. As with any vaccine, adverse reactions are possible. Decisions must carefully balance the risks associated with vaccination against the potential benefits for each species.

Strategies to protect native mammal species are being considered separately.

The most important safeguard remains effective biosecurity for captive species, alongside broader efforts to reduce threats to native species in the wild.

Find out more about these efforts at www.dcceew.gov.au/birdflu



Find out more

Information and resources about H5 bird flu are available at **birdflu.gov.au**.

**Emergency Animal
Disease hotline:**

1800 675 888